COMMENTARY

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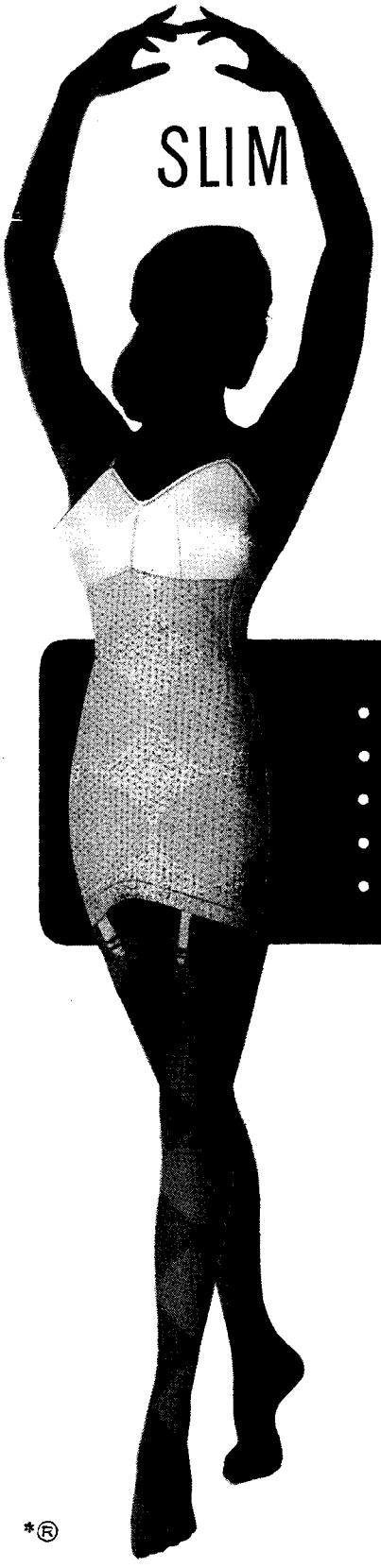

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COMMENTARY

EUROPE'S DEMOCRACY AND "AMERICAN IMPERIALISM"

Despite Truman's Election the Fear Persists

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

LONDON

ANY inquiry into the present state of relations between progressives in Britain and in the United States must start with the recent presidential election. In this country we believed Dr. Gallup too; and, as a matter of fact, the impact of Truman's liberal-labor victory was perhaps greater here than in America itself—if only because Europeans can no longer afford to take political upsets philosophically.

In this country it was the Conservative party, and in particular Mr. Churchill, that felt the shock, just as in France it was General de Gaulle. The day after the vote count, Labor was more firmly in the saddle here than it has been since its own astounding sweep in 1945, and the prospects of winning the crucial 1950 election had become distinctly brighter. The Truman victory also sharpened the dispute between the Churchill-Woolton-Beaverbrook wing of official Conservatism, which clings to *laissez-faire* and hopes to win the next election on the furious reaction against planning and controls, and the Eden-Butler-Stanley wing, which plumps for Tory-controlled planning (and a modified version of corporatism). Finally, the election destroyed the basis of Churchill's notorious Llandudno speech of last October, with its open appeal to the United States to bring matters to a head over the Berlin dispute in the near future. Whether or not President Truman revives the projected Vinson mission, it seems clear that "atomic diplomacy" will be at a discount for some considerable time. Labor party headquarters were in any case inclined to make the Llandudno speech the basis of a general "warmongering" charge against Churchill and the Tories at the next general election; what held them back was fear of a Dewey administration (although Mr. Attlee and the Cabinet are said to have received very accurate pre-election forecasts —among the few that there were). Now that this danger is past, it is pretty certain that

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AT LEAST as important as the physical assistance that the Marshall Plan brings to European reconstruction, is the political state of mind in which this aid is given and received. For if the European democracies come to regard American foreign policy as a power-grabbing and warmongering "capitalistic maneuver," as the Communists would have it—and especially if our own actions lend aid and comfort to this propaganda—there is little hope of preventing the political community of the West from relapsing into nationalistic anarchy, or worse. In this article, GEORGE LICHTHEIM writes from London on how American foreign policy, in the wake of the Truman election, shapes up in the eyes of European social democracy. Mr. Lichtheim is London correspondent for two Palestinian dailies and has contributed widely to British and American periodicals. His most recent article in COMMENTARY was "Britain's Third Empire," published in the December 1948 issue.

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the next election will largely be fought on the peace issue, and that the Conservatives will be thrown on the defensive.

THE New Deal victory, however, also effected certain subsurface changes which are possibly of even greater importance. In addition to restoring Labor's self-confidence as a party it also restored its threatened internal cohesion, which a Dewey administration, it was felt, might have strained beyond the breaking-point. Signs of such strain had become evident in the weeks immediately before the election. Both the *New Statesman* and the *Tribune*—reliable weathervanes if without great influence on the government—were beginning to reflect the sullen mood of the Socialist rank and file, a mood which found vent in "isolationist" slogans or in plain defeatism. The *Statesman,* after observing that the President's "public humiliation" over the Vinson incident "made no difference to Mr. Truman's own chances of re-election which were nil, but probably puts paid to the last Democratic hope of winning a majority in the Senate," consoled itself with the reflection: "At least . . . we shall know where we are. . . . In a few weeks' time the United States will adopt the policy which Mr. Churchill preached at Llandudno." The *Tribune* similarly prepared its readers for a further reactionary drift in world affairs, complete with recognition of Franco Spain, and asked how far this could go without splitting the Labor party and destroying the government. These were not isolated expressions of opinion. Whether the Left's fears of a Dewey administration were warranted or not is hardly a question that needs discussion now; the fact is that the entire Left, including its most vigorously anti-Russian elements, was gloomily prepared for a political ice-age.

In retrospect it is clear that, in this climate of political opinion, the United Kingdom had a narrow escape when Mr. Dewey failed to reach the White House, for his accession to the presidency would have revived the flagging fortunes of Toryism in this country, hamstrung the Labor government, and perhaps lost them the next election. In which case Britain would be split, whereas today she is united on the one essential point: resistance to Soviet expansion. Given the political outlook of the British working class, Labor is the only force that can unite the country in the face of this challenge, just as in 1939 the Conservatives were needed to unite their own followers and those of the Left in the face of the Nazi danger. Not that people here take the war scare seriously, but they know that in the long as well as in the short run the above holds good: if war does come the Tories can be relied on, whether they are in the government or not, but if they are in the government their presence there may split the nation from top to bottom. The idea of a Churchill government allied with a Gaullist regime in France, and backed by a Republican administration in Washington, is a nightmare to the more clear-headed Foreign Office and State Department officials. As the *Tribune* put it, "it would be of no earthly use to anyone except Stalin."

FROM the above it does not follow that Labor has already achieved a unified political outlook or that there may not be further squalls ahead, but undoubtedly the outlook is more hopeful than at any time since 1945. Primarily this is due to the fact that the Truman victory killed the incipient anti-Americanism which the Communists had been busily stimulating. Progressives have found it impossible to identify themselves with Dewey or to regard an America typified by Dewey as anything but the plutocratic imperialism the Communists said it was. They can and do identify themselves with Truman—especially since most of the press and big business were against him—and it is this that has currently knocked the bottom from under the Communist propaganda campaign in this country.

It should be borne in mind that the Communist party is far more influential here than in the United States, since, apart from its direct control of certain important trade unions, its agitation colors the outlook of large numbers of Labor party supporters. A Dewey victory would have made it more

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difficult for the Labor left-wing to maintain its hold over those elements who are attracted by the Communists' claim to represent the only consistent alternative to "Wall Street and the warmongers." Not surprisingly, the *Daily Worker* was one of the few papers to greet the election results with scarcely veiled irritation. Wallace's eclipse was a particularly heavy blow, coming as it did after an intensive build-up. The present tendency is for the Communists to keep their fingers crossed for another Vinson mission, this time with official approval. If it comes off, Truman will be promoted to the status of an unreliable peace champion, after having been pictured for two years as a determined though incompetent warmonger. It might do no harm for some such mission to take place, if only to do away with the myth that the United States is set on war. This myth received a heavy blow on November 2, but working-class distrust of "American capitalists" goes deep, and the less bellicose Washington sounds, the better for all concerned.

Meanwhile it is to be hoped that the United States will put its democratic foot forward when dealing with other nations, and that less will be heard of Free Enterprise and more of human rights. No European, however conservative, can be expected to get excited over the antithesis capitalism-communism (which the Amsterdam Assembly of Protestant Churches last September was naive enough to adopt for purposes of distinction between rival "ideals"). On the other hand, nearly all Europeans feel strongly about civil rights, having recently experienced their total abolition and fearing that the Russians would prove as ruthless as the Germans. If Mr. Truman can get his own civil-rights program adopted, it would do no harm if the "Voice of America" subsequently raised the question of similar rights behind the Iron Curtain.

But it would be fatal to couple such propaganda with appeasement of Franco and praise of Salazar. The strongest card in the Communist pack is the assertion—half believed by many Socialists who hope it isn't true—that Americans don't really care about democracy. It is after all no secret to anyone that Washington and London have for the last three years deliberately kept Franco in power for fear of worse to come. A continuation of this base and cowardly approach could undo some of the beneficial effect of the New Deal revival, just as a Gaullist coup in France would throw everything once more into the melting-pot.

If Mr. Truman's re-election heartened the Left, the Gaullist sweep in France did not altogether reassure the Right. British Toryism, like Conservativism in Holland or Scandinavia, is parliamentary and democratic, or at least constitutional. In this it differs not only from the Central European model but also from the historic Right in France, which has never overcome its hankering after authoritarianism. No one knows exactly how far de Gaulle would go in the direction of stifling civil liberties, but his public utterances are not reassuring and his entourage includes some neo-fascists as well as old-fashioned authoritarians.

In his statement following the strong showing of his "Rally" in the elections to the Second Chamber, de Gaulle not only sneered at the parliamentarians but implied that he retained his faith in corporatist organizations of labor differing from ordinary trade unions. Apparently these are to be established under the patronage of his super-party while it is still in opposition. From here it would be no great step to full-fledged corporatism should de Gaulle obtain power. It is of course open to the General's supporters to claim that these organizations will be voluntary and that no attempt will be made to interfere with labor's own creations, but the genuineness of such assurances will probably be measured by the amount of trouble likely to be caused by departing from them.

In any event, there is not the slightest doubt that de Gaulle would run into headlong collision with the Communist-dominated CGT, which still includes a majority of the organized workers, and in the process of overcoming their resistance he would find himself impelled to go farther and faster than

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he himself might wish. A Gaullist regime might tolerate the Socialist and Catholic unions, but if the half-baked ideas on corporate solidarity and management-labor cooperation that de Gaulle has uttered from time to time are to be seriously applied, labor would soon find itself fighting for its elementary rights. It is significant that the Gaullists have on this issue broken with the very moderate Catholic unions, which form the backbone of the now much shrunken MRP.

The "Rally" has in fact become a meeting-place for various brands of authoritarianism previously disunited by the Pétain-de Gaulle split, and to judge from the failure of the MRP in the recent elections, the Church, through the obedient country clergy, is once more shepherding its politically passive rural flock into the conservative camp. There is of course no great harm in this provided the ordinary rules of the constitutional game are preserved and the MRP is allowed to offer liberal-minded Catholics a political alternative, but nobody can be sure just how far constitutional liberty would survive under Gaullist rule.

To the British Labor government, a Gaullist regime in France would be a body-blow. It would probably lead to the formation of a reactionary Latin Bloc, including Franco Spain, and to endless French intrigues in Southern and Western Germany. Britain would then become even more dependent on the support of the Scandinavians and other small Western nations, and in fact would have to content herself with leadership of the Northwestern group of European countries. This prospect is not altogether to the liking of British Conservatives, who also have a clearer understanding of the real balance of world forces than the provincial and obscurantist French Right.

It was noticed here that de Gaulle coupled his contemptuous references to parliament, and his demand for French predominance on the Continent, with unfriendly side-glances at the United States. "France has lived for centuries without the Marshall Plan"—ergo, there is no need to give in on the subject of the Ruhr. Even those who sympathize with the French thesis that the Ruhr should not be controlled by its former owners are at a loss to account for this lack of perspective. There is, however, a very genuine issue at stake, namely whether Germany or France should be the stronger factor in the Western Union—to the construction of which de Gaulle does not object in principle. Without having said so in so many words, both Washington and London seem to have decided to put their chips on Germany. In taking this decision they may have been influenced by the thought that German Communism is a mere sect compared with the mass movement in France, and that the Germans are more likely than the French to put their hearts into a military struggle, should it be forced upon the West. The choice is nonetheless a dangerous one, no matter how unreliable the political state of France today.

And of course it is never to be avowed openly and in public. The British electorate, which still does not realize that Britain's control of the Ruhr was liquidated in 1947 under pressure of financial need, would be even more surprised to learn that after letting the Americans control the bi-zone, Mr. Bevin is now prepared to hand the works back to their former owners; or that as between their German "enemies" and their French "allies," the British and American governments have opted for the former. Similarly, the Labor party would be astounded if it were told that the Franco-German dispute over pre-eminence in Western Europe has become a conflict between the Catholic nationalists of France and the "Christian-Democratic" nationalists of the former Reich, with the Socialists reduced almost to the role of onlookers.

That the United States is not to be wholly blamed for this result is evident when it is remembered that Mr. Bevin had the ball at his feet for two years and could have kicked it through the goal of Ruhr socialization at any time if his political and military advisers had not decided otherwise. Nevertheless some blame must attach to the Americans for obstructing socialization, as even so friendly a critic as Miss Barbara

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Ward recognizes.* Here again the New Deal revival and labor's increased political standing in Washington hold out slightly improved hopes for the future. It is probably no exaggeration to say that from now on most of the progressive initiative will have to come from Washington. Apart from Mr. Bevin's personal conservatism, there is the general parochialism of the British Labor government, its tendency to turn aside from matters not directly under its control, and the colorless Fabianism which handicaps it in the search for effective political symbols in the international arena. A government that hardly knows how to address its own people, and that has accomplished the seemingly impossible result of making socialism boring, is not very well equipped to win the affection of foreigners. Its solid virtues go unnoticed or are taken for granted. There is of course a case for holding that Mr. Attlee, like Horatio, represents the commonsensible qualities without which the whole drama would lack reference. But clearly the British Horatio is being made to carry a load, if one may judge from the diminishing effectiveness of his claim to represent the true middle-road. Like it or not, Mr. Truman will henceforth have to undertake the leadership of the Third Force in Europe.

It is here that one touches upon the real problem of the Left in Britain: its growing disillusionment with the fruits of its own victory. Socialism so far has failed to usher in the brave new world, and Labor's continuation in office seems unlikely to change the prevailing tone of society. In part this is due to the familiar economic difficulties through which Britain is going at present, but these difficulties are themselves the symptoms of a shift in power relations which has nullified a good part of the significance of Labor's victory in 1945. The "dwarfing of Europe," to use the fashionable Toynbeean phrase, inevitably gives a parochial appearance to what twenty years ago would have been the central fact of world politics. It is an ironic fact that the Labor party grew to political maturity and finally achieved power at the very time when Britain lost its former pre-eminence. In 1930 a Socialist government in Britain meant a great deal more than it does today, but it was only after the Great Depression, the Keynesian revolution in economics, the Hitler experience, and the Second World War, that conditions were mature for a full-fledged Socialist experiment. By then, unfortunately but not accidentally, the center of world power and of capitalism had both definitely shifted across the Atlantic. Again, Britain is both less solvent and more Socialist than any other part of the Commonwealth, including Australia and New Zealand, who are under Labor management but have not embarked upon extensive socialization schemes, while the planned development of the African empire not only calls for huge capital investments which have to be wrung out of the home market, but drains off many of the ablest and most energetic people in the managerial stratum. Once in Africa, though employed by state corporations, they are difficult to distinguish from private businessmen.

Thus the only area in which some sort of socialist *mystique* can be expected to take root is the expanding welfare activities of the British community, its housing, education, medical care, etc. This, although important, is insufficient to generate the kind of conviction which the Poles or the Yugoslavs seem to derive from the construction of "youth railways" and similar enterprises. Not that anyone envies the kind of system which produces such results, by means of state-controlled youth movements, forcible

*Cf. *The West at Bay,* especially page 107. Miss Ward is assistant editor of the *Economist* and one of the Marshall Plan's most eloquent apologists in Britain. She is also a moderate Socialist and a liberal Catholic. It is therefore interesting to find her deploring the American preference for conservatives, especially of the Christian Democrat variety, as against the Social Democrats. The Americans, as she points out, had no first-hand opportunity to watch the wholesale collapse of the European Right in the fight against Hitler, and its subsequent zealous collaboration with the "New Order." This is of course particularly true of the German Right, which since 1945 has changed its name but not its nature.

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recruiting of unskilled labor, and similar devices; it is just that one senses the absence of a corresponding, if undirected, purposefulness. Nationalization and the export drive are not substitutes, for the successful attainment of critical export goods is in the main being accomplished by private firms, while the nationalized industries are struggling with bureaucratic reorganization schemes in which the workers take little part.

Significantly, the few novel and successful experiments in joint labor-management control of production are being quietly undertaken by private businesses. There is little sense of partnership in management under the bureaucratic National Coal Board. Conversely, the projected nationalization of the steel industry leaves untouched the whole sphere of worker-management relations, the chief purpose of the scheme apparently being to eliminate the present owner-directors in favor of state nominees at the top management level. Further down it is hoped to give somewhat greater latitude to the technicians. All this may be good socialism, but it is not very visionary or exciting and the electorate seems to be getting bored with the whole subject.

The Left therefore is once more inclined to take a more hopeful view of the United States, and to look to it for political guidance and inspiration. It is being encouraged in this attitude by the manner in which ECA has been functioning, and particularly by the close cooperation established under Mr. Harriman's direction between liberal economists and labor representatives. The mere fact that somebody from "Wall Street" can get on well with Socialist labor leaders is in itself a blow to the Communists. Finally, the part played by ECA in getting European governments to draw up common plans cuts across their propaganda lines.

It is all the more unfortunate that the Ruhr settlement seems designed to place Germany's steel industry in the hands of an arrogant and reactionary cabal of industrialists. There is the further incongruity that the compulsory disarmament likely to be imposed on Germany will work in favor of its steel exports at the expense of France and Britain, a large proportion of whose steel capacity will of necessity be devoted to arms production while the Germans will be free to concentrate on exportable civilian goods. This matters little to the United States, but it is bound to hurt Britain economically, and France politically. The alternative is to place the whole of West European steel production under international control. Failing this, an uncontrolled Ruhr is likely to revive both the pre-war German steel cartel and the intransigence of German nationalism. This is the type of problem which progressives here would like to think the United States is trying to solve on lines acceptable to labor.

IT WOULD be a mistake to leave this subject without a brief glance at the controversy about "American imperialism" which goes on wherever Socialists discuss foreign affairs. In the process of clearing their minds of Communist cant on this topic, some Labor party supporters tend to relapse into the state of political innocence typified by the writings of Norman Angell, for whom "imperialism" is strictly a military phenomenon. Others are frankly worried and unhappy. Still others content themselves with the reflection that the imperialism of a democratic country is less dangerous than that of a totalitarian despotism. Miss Ward has already been cited, and her important and interesting book will bear further quotation. Since it is mainly written in defence of ERP, her argument not surprisingly pivots on the assumption that the Marshall Plan is intended to make Europe independent of the United States as well as the Soviet Union. To state the matter in her own terms:

"As for the suggestion that ERP will be used as a spearhead of control, the contrary cannot yet be proved since the Plan has still to run its course. Yet two facts suggest caution. The first is that the Plan is essentially one of industrial revival with the aim of restoring a viable and independent Europe. The idea that the United States

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will not in five years' time be bearing so heavy a European commitment is one of the chief attractions of the scheme. The second point is the Americans' scrupulous care taken so far to avoid demanding an economic (or political) *quid pro quo* for the gifts that are to be made. This mood of disinterested generosity may pass, but when one remembers how dire was Europe's plight in 1947, how desperate its need for help, and how ready some of its more hardly pressed governments were to give away anything they were asked for, America's restraint can only mean—to the unbiased eye—that imperialist control of Europe was neither the open nor the covert aim of ERP."

In following this line of argument, liberal-minded Socialists have the advantage of being able to rebut the crude and silly Communist propaganda thesis which pictures an America run by a handful of monopolists taking over control of Europe's physical assets—mines, railways, factories, etc.—and forcing the reluctant European governments to join an anti-Soviet crusade. This propaganda has proved self-defeating—but only because labor here and across the Atlantic has proved sufficiently strong to nullify the tendencies making in precisely that direction. To deny the existence of such tendencies is no help to anyone, and to ignore that Japan is today as much an American protectorate as Egypt was until recent years a British one, is to shut one's eyes to reality.

THE truth is that the simple antithesis imperialism-democracy which has grown up in this country over a period of years does not quite fit the American reality; the United States is both more democratic politically, and more progressive economically, than Britain was at the height of her imperialist expansion, so that it is not necessarily a retrogressive step for America to take control of territories where *modern* capitalism is still a novelty, modern democracy unheard of. But any such suggestion is heresy both to the Tory Right and the Socialist Left in Britain; to the former because the lesson it points is too uncomfortable, and to the latter because Socialists have been conditioned to equate imperialism with stagnation and oppression—though of late they are beginning to find some use for the colonial system, at least in Africa and Malaya where it is still functioning reasonably well.

Nor is this reaction surprising; it takes a certain amount of detachment to make even Socialists admit that American imperialism—if there is such a thing—may actually make for progress and need not run counter to democracy. The Communists have worked hard to give everything connected with the United States a bad name, and it is tempting to counter their propaganda by claiming that the objects of American policy are purely selfless. The trouble with this kind of argument is that it fails to convince those for whom it is chiefly intended. The politically conscious élite of the British Labor movement is still distrustful of the United States even where it is already sceptical of Soviet "socialism": hence the strength of "Third Force" sentiment and the incipient isolationism which is today so pronounced a feature of all political discussions in Britain.

These suspicions, moreover, are constantly fed by the disgruntlement of the left-wing intelligentsia—reflected, for example, in the gloomy satisfaction taken by a representative journal like the *New Statesman* in every sign of political imbecility across the Atlantic. The people who act as opinion-formers on the Left are very ready to believe that the rest of the world is as stupid and malignant as they have always thought, and every proof to that effect is duly noted and publicized. A welcome surprise like the recent elections acts as a tonic for a moment, but wears off unless it can be regarded as a sign that things are genuinely moving in the right direction. Nothing is more important than that this impression should continue to be given and that, to vary a legal phrase, the United States, in its international policy, as well as domestically, should not only be, but manifestly appear to be democratic.

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DOES THE JEW EXIST?

Sartre's Morality Play About Anti-Semitism

HAROLD ROSENBERG

"Eternity changes him into himself."
—Mallarmé

IN CONSIDERING Sartre's conception of the Jew and his relation to anti-Semitism we must not forget that *Reflections on the Jewish Question* (published by Schocken as *Anti-Semite and Jew*) was written immediately after the downfall of the Nazis. It was a moment of intense confusion as to the meaning of the terrible events that had just taken place and of uncertainty as to the attitudes and groupings that would now emerge in liberated France. The Occupation had enlivened the current of anti-Semitism among Frenchmen of all classes. With the return of those Jews who had escaped the German hangman everyone was most anxious that this "question" should not once more stir up hidden rancors. Thus, as Sartre tells us, in the midst of the general greeting of returned prisoners and deportees not a word about the Jews, for fear of irritating the anti-Semites. This testimony is supported by André Spire's account, in his preface to *Bilan Juif*, of the difficulties experienced in finding a publisher in Paris by those who wished to speak of what had happened. "There has been too much hate," they were told. "Let's have a love story."

Under such circumstances for Sartre to have challenged the anti-Semite as a menace to Frenchmen, to have called upon Gentiles to organize in a war on anti-Semitism, and to have welcomed the French Jews into the French nation was an act of generosity, of feeling, courage, and good sense. With different shadings of collaborationists and supporters of the Resistance bitterly eyeing one another, no opportunist or politician calculating the advantages to be derived from attracting segments of public opinion would have *isolated* the question of anti-Semitism. Yet here was the ultimate poison of the mind from which many social contaminations had flowed and could still be expected to flow. The Dreyfus Affair had permanently established the role of anti-Semitism in all conspiracies against the French people. Precisely because it might have been bad politics at this instant to launch an assault against the slanderers and murderers of Jews, it was sound patriotism and a gesture of human solidarity.

So as an *act* performed in a given circumstance we ought wholly to applaud Sartre's *Réflexions sur la Question Juive*. With its three characters—the vicious leering psychopathic anti-Semite, the "inauthentic" Jew vainly trying to escape in disguise, and the "authentic" Jew proudly turning upon his tormentors—one can consider the work in its original appearance as a kind of 20th-century morality play sent to do service at a political battle front. Anyone coming upon

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JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S three articles on anti-Semitism and the modern Jew, published in COMMENTARY in April, May, and June of 1948, were perhaps the most widely debated articles yet to appear in this magazine. The complete volume of which these articles formed the larger part has now been published by Schocken Books under the title *Anti-Semite and Jew*, and the reception of this book by the reviewers promises to continue the current of interest first set in motion by the COMMENTARY articles. HAROLD ROSENBERG here attempts a full-scale critical analysis of Sartre's views, with special reference to his provocative thesis that the Jew is today primarily a reflex of the mentality and attitude of the anti-Semite. Mr. Rosenberg has been a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY and other periodicals and has published a volume of poetry, *Trance Above the Streets* (1943). He was born in Brooklyn in 1906 and is at present with the radio division of the Advertising Council.

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it should have been stirred to greater effort against the enemy and against the traitor in himself.

Reading Sartre's essay in America in 1948 is, however, a somewhat different matter. Not that the battle against anti-Semitism is over, of course. But Sartre's study cannot play the same part in it at this date and in this country. Hence we are not tempted to ask, "Is it useful?" rather than, "Is it true?" Although still attracted by the magnanimity of Sartre's act, we can scrutinize dispassionately his image both of the Jew and of the anti-Semite.

For Sartre the Jew exists. The Jewishness of the Jew is not merely, as with the democratic thinkers, a few ethnic, religious, and physical traits added to a *man*. In dissociating himself from liberal rationalism and its abstract man, Sartre asserts the reality of the Jewish identity as a "concrete synthesis" created by history. There is, in short, THE JEW, not only men and women who happen to be Jewish. With this conclusion, "unscientific" as it may appear, it is necessary, I believe, to agree. In fact, the best passage for me in Sartre's essay is his criticism of the democratic defender of the Jew, for whom all men are essentially alike, for whom the Jew can belong to human society only to the extent that he suppresses himself as a Jew, and for whom the assertion by Jews of Jewish difference is a sign of stubbornness, backwardness, or ill will. The liberal-scientific concept of the human being, and the demands for uniformity that go with it, somehow seemed sounder while plans for a universal society were on the order of the day. We would have been willing to lose ourselves as we were for the sake of the men we might have become.

The dream of eliminating all inherited differences among peoples has proven, however, to be Utopian, and not only not possible but not even desirable as a program. Has not democratic universalism meant in practice not a society of man but the absorption of small nations and minorities into larger ones, even if with full equality and freedom? Theoretically, the democrat is for the assimilation of all nations into man in general; actually, man turns out to be the American, the Englishman, the Frenchman, the Russian. As soon as concrete questions of the language, the mores, the style of the future One World are raised the difficulties involved in universalism become visible. Sartre is justified in beginning with these difficulties, with the concrete historical "syntheses" represented by nations, peoples, cultures. The Jewish question centers on the fact of Jewish difference.

Yet Sartre's recognition of the Jewish fact does not take him beyond the democratic conception of the big nation assimilating minorities. For in the end he, too, wishes to dissolve the Jewish collective identity into its abstract particles, that is, into men made more human by ceasing to be Jews. He wants the French Jew to become a Frenchman, as the democrats do. Sartre differs from the democrats only in falling short of the idealism of their theory of man which seeks the ultimate homogeneity of human beings. Though he comes out for socialism he does not say a word about dissolving the French identity. For Sartre it is enough that *the Jews* should be assimilated.

This exceptionalism he maintains on the grounds of the peculiar nature of the Jewish identity, that the Jews "have no history" and are but the wretched creatures of anti-Semitism. We shall take up this characterization shortly. Here let us note that Sartre offers us much less than the liberals. For it makes sense that the Jews should assimilate into *man* (though it makes sense only as a theory). But why, especially for a socialist, should the Jew look forward to becoming a *Frenchman*? Even if, as Sartre says, "bit by bit and by the very course of history." The Frenchman himself, from the socialist point of view, should look forward to becoming something else, through, to use Sartre's term, "choosing himself" as a European or as a socialist.

After all, the democrat is really not unaware that the Jews exist. He simply does not believe that they *have* to exist as Jews.

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He believes that by changing their situation, by creating a situation common to all men, the Jews, together with all peoples, will shed their particularities "bit by bit." Sartre, like the liberal, anticipates that with social improvement both the Jew and the anti-Semite will be eliminated, but he does not anticipate that the Frenchman will be eliminated. Thus what Sartre calls "concrete liberalism" is nothing else than liberalism that has discarded its abstract theory of man and embraced its nationalist reality, the Frenchman, the American, the Englishman, though with an ideology of good will. It leads Sartre to a nationalist socialism in which the democratic ideal of a free, equitable, and united community is conceived as realizable within the confines of the old national state. But in such a socialism, at least as much as among the liberals criticized by Sartre, the Jew as Jew is felt to be an obstacle inherited from the past—as we see among certain British socialists—and the sooner he liquidates himself into the larger "whole" the better.

IT SEEMS to Sartre that all Jews wish to disappear into the nations in which they live and would do so were they not prevented by anti-Semitism: "the authentic Jew . . . is not opposed to assimilation." No doubt many Jews agree that if there were no anti-Semitism there would be no Jews. They reason as follows: Political freedom and social opportunities for the Jews have gone hand in hand with enlightenment; enlightenment has brought assimilation. The flight from Judaism has been stopped only by persecution and discrimination. Hence it is a "law" of history that the perfection of liberty and enlightenment will see the end of the Jews. If that were the case, Sartre, regardless of the validity of his arguments, would have gotten to the heart of the matter.

The fault in this reasoning is that it links the process of assimilation with one aspect of the situation in the free Western countries during the past one hundred fifty years—their liberalism—but not with its other aspects—their racial and national prejudice. The conditions under which minorities like the Jews have tended to merge into the cultures around them have not been those of complete freedom and equality but of partial liberty and limited equality. Even in the most liberal democracies, where the greatest opportunities for merging have been available, prejudice against "aliens" has never ceased to exist. To overcome handicaps, Poles, Irishmen, Italians, Ukrainians, Jews have desired in various countries to lose their identifying marks. The drive to assimilation, in short, represents reaction to pressures exercised by a more powerful culture at least as much as it does to liberty and enlightenment.

Jewish assimilation of the past century belongs to transitional conditions of partial freedom and partial enlightenment. No "law" of assimilation can be deduced from this experience. We have no historical proof that in a completely free world the Jews, or any other minority, would choose to dissolve itself. We have equal grounds to assume that in such a world every group, regional or cultural, would find no opposition between its interest in itself and its past and its interest in the rest of mankind. Just as the individual would remain interested in himself, his history, and his development and not feel forced to "assimilate" his uniqueness into an overpowering environment. The assimilationism of Jews in France thus provides no basis for Sartre's thesis that the Jew wants to get rid of his Jewishness.

THE Jew exists, says Sartre, but he exists in a mirror. "It is the anti-Semite who creates the Jew." The entire life of the Jew, his innermost sentiment of self as well as his relations to other men, is made of the substance of the anti-Semite's glare. In himself and for himself the Jew is nothing: he is "one whom other men consider a Jew."

To establish this anti-Semitic "being" of the Jew, Sartre relies on the theory that a man "cannot be distinguished from his situation." If we look at the situation of the Jew we see only the anti-Semite and the victim of his peculiar hatred. For the Jew today, Sartre insists, can point to no histori-

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cal identity save that springing from anti-Semitism.

Let us analyze this method of defining the Jew. "If I wish to know *who* the Jew is," says Sartre, "I must first inquire into the situation surrounding him, since he is a being in a situation" (his italics). This could imply that human identity can be deduced from "environment." To know a Flemish miner I would study his work and conditions and the landscape in which he lives, etc.; the same for a Parisian novelist. But such an approach, defining human reality by external factors, would be frankly mechanistic, and Sartre rejects mechanism. For him the individual and his situation "form a synthetic whole" not in the sense of deriving the man from the situation but in that the man is a *free actor* within it. To know the situation means for Sartre also to know the "being" in it, whether one's own or another's. To know "who the Jew is," we have been told, we have to inquire into his situation, but to know his situation we have to inquire who the Jew is.

Sartre breaks out of this circle by adopting in practice the externality which he rejects in theory, just as he adopts the conclusion of liberalism whose philosophy of man he criticizes. His Jew, though he "makes himself" by his choices, has his being given by his environment, defined as the immovable scrutiny of the anti-Semite. But Sartre's externality is more limited than that of the materialists. Besides anti-Semitism the latter would include in the situation of the Jew various developments of modern history: the Industrial Revolution, the break-up of the old communities, the decline of church and family, the establishment of cosmopolitan cultures. They would recognize that to the extent that the modern Jew is the product of other men, the democrat too has "created" him by *his* glance. Sartre refers to such factors only as explanations for various unpleasant "Jewish traits." The self of the Jew he defines *demoniacally* as formed by anti-Semitism, which to Sartre is a free, autonomous, uncaused, disembodied and measureless spirit of evil.

If the situation is to reveal the "who" of the man in it, its dimensions must extend to his beginnings. For instance, the situation of Oedipus at the opening of Sophocles' tragedy does not tell us who Oedipus is. Here the situation, which includes the present and a limited portion of the past but stops short of Oedipus' origins, *conceals* the identity of the hero. If, following Sartre, I were "to inquire into the situation surrounding him," I should learn that King Oedipus is the son of Polybus and that he is now "choosing" with respect to the plague in Thebes. This knowledge of the situation would cause me to be mistaken as to Oedipus' identity, as it would prevent Oedipus from "choosing himself." My ignorance could not be overcome until the situation, which now proves Oedipus to be another, had been changed into one that reveals the content of the moment when Oedipus came into the world. *In brief, a man is not always knowable through his situation.* The situation will form a genuine "synthetic whole" with the individual in it only when the fact *originating his identity*—that Oedipus is the son of Laius and Jocasta—becomes a visible part of it.

THE situation of the Jew does not reveal who the Jew is except when it becomes a situation that discloses his link with Abraham, Moses, and David, from whom the Jewish identity sprang. Such a revealing situation has come into being during the various movements to regain the Land of the Fathers, whether by prayer or politics. In these moments—and with the Orthodox Jew the "moment" has lasted for two thousand years, since his constant prayer is a continuing act directed toward redeeming the Land—the Jew and his situation are indeed one.

Sartre fails to consider the Jew and his situation in relation to his beginnings. He splits his "being" in time and in place. "It is the Christians," he says, "who have created the Jew." The opposite is, of course, the case: the Jews created Christianity. But Sartre has cut the Jews off from their past;

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he even thinks it possible to speak of the Jews while "limiting my description to the Jews in France." If, nevertheless, the Jew's historical feet still protrude from under the blanket of the situation with which Sartre has "surrounded" him, Sartre has misunderstood fundamentally the problem of identity. It is surely not enough simply to state that the Jews of the Exile are in a different predicament from those who "at a remote time in the past [possessed] a religious and historical community that was called Israel." The position in the world of King Oedipus of Thebes differed entirely from that of the infant exposed on the mountain—yet he was the same individual. To show that the origin of the Jew lies not in Abraham but in the anti-Semite, Sartre would have to indicate *at what point* the Jew of former times ceased to exist and a different Jew was born out of anti-Semitism. It was not when they were driven out by the Romans, for Sartre himself asserts that the Christian created the Jew "by putting a stop to his assimilation"—in other words, that the act of the Christians was a negative one and that even in the Diaspora the original Jews existed.

Thus Sartre's argument that the Jews of the Exile are disconnected from the Jews of antiquity rests entirely on external considerations; they no longer live in the same place, perform the same rites, possess the same institutions. But the continuity of the modern Jew with the Jews of the Old Testament is established by those acts that arise from his internal cohesion with his ultimate beginnings, in which his future is contained as possible destiny—the acts of turning toward the Promised Land in his crises. And these acts, not deducible from his surroundings, *make* the Jew's situation and reveal who the Jew is.

HAVING mistaken the Jew's identity, Sartre cannot comprehend *his* history, *his* creative accomplishments, *his* possibilities. Measuring the Jews by general standards of ethnic uniformity, sovereignty, and church-going, he finds that the Jews are not a people or a race (or that belonging to this "race" means "a hooked nose, protruding ears, thick lips"), not a nation, not a religion. From this he concludes that "the sole tie that binds them is the hostility and disdain of the societies that surround them." The Jews, says Sartre, "have no history . . . twenty centuries of dispersion and political impotence forbids its [the Jewish community's] having a *historic past*" (his italics).

What is the conception of history that excludes the Jews from possessing a historic past? Sartre refers to Hegel's idea that "a community is historical to the degree that it remembers its past." Obviously, *remembering* is not something that can be "forbidden" by "dispersion and political impotence." What can be forbidden is that this remembered past should be "historical" in the nationalist sense of civil rebellions and wars. That this is precisely what Sartre means by a historic past becomes plain when he adds to Hegel's dictum, "the Jewish community is the least historical of all, for it keeps a memory of nothing but a long martyrdom, that is, of a long passivity." The Jews, of course, remember many things besides martyrdom, and even in that relation they may recall not passivity but resistance; for instance, the dialectical battles of the rabbis against the overwhelming power of the medieval Church. But they were not able to resort to arms, and on this score alone can Sartre deny them a history.

Only if warfare is the essence of the historical is the memory of the Jew during the past two thousand years without historical quality. Is not this period of Exile, with its hopes, coherent with earlier exiles, previous redemptions? The entire story of the Jew—*including the movements toward assimilation that form part of it from the beginning*—has an inner meaning and a structure that would seem to make it history *par excellence*. To such an extent is the Jew identified by the story he remembers, that political and social institutions, linguistic and somatic characteristics, even religious beliefs and practices appear superficial to the common autobiography: these may change, through the uniqueness of his tale the Jew remains

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himself. In fact, history is the burden under which the Jew all but breaks.

The common story of the Jews and not "the hostility and disdain" of others is the principle of their togetherness. That each member of a group has the same story to tell, which is the story of all as well as the story of the teller, is the basis of collective identities, whether it be the story of the miraculous founding of a cult or of the exploitation and struggles of the proletariat. This story alive in the individual may not make itself manifest in his behavior except in peculiar circumstances, perhaps even to his surprise, for no man acts "historically" all the time. The Jews have shown that without being a race, a nation, or a religion, it is possible for people to remain together in a net of memory and expectation.

It is because of his presumed lack of history that the French Jew is to become a good Frenchman. "We have only to welcome him without reserve; our history will be his history, or at least his son's." The motive is no doubt laudable. But to say that the Jew has no history in comparison with the French *worker*—for to Sartre only a socialist France will truly absorb the Jews—is to create a nationalist confusion with respect to the history of both the Jews and of France.

Each community has a common story, beginning in an event—a revolution, a conquest, a miracle, the founding of a city—which gave birth to its identity, creating it, so to speak, out of nothingness. The Jews differ from other peoples, both ancient and modern, in that every Jew, regardless of class or even of blood origin, is included equally in the entire common account. Whether he begins with himself as a French Jew, an American, a Pole, a Turk, or as worker, scholar or millionaire, the Jew who extends his story backwards in time reaches the same substance of events converging into the Old Testament and its lucid geography of his childhood. The survival of the Jews may well be attributable to this "democratic" participation in the Jewish past which appears in the earliest Biblical situations and which was immeasurably strengthened by the prophets. The peasants and the urban proletariat of Greece and Rome were not, and could not remain, the vessels of ancient Greek or Roman history, which was created above them and to their exclusion by aristocrats and heroes. With the decline of their élites those historic identities disappeared. Each Jew, however, possessing from the first the equal status of a member of a clan, could call himself by the primary name of Son of Abraham and preserve the whole in his single existence. In this respect the history of the Jews resembles that of a religion, in which all believers have the same status, more than it does the history of nations. The vision that sees the Jews as "a nation of priests and a holy people" stresses this totality equivalent to the religious. Yet Jewish history is the history of a people, not of a cult, since the participation is not metaphysical but in an actual past.

It is likely that there are Jews in France who feel that they have no history, except a history of persecution. But if such sentiments exist among Jews they give no support to Sartre's "no-history" thesis, since he is not attempting to derive his definition of the Jew from what the Jews feel about themselves but from their situation. Besides, not all Jews even in post-Vichy France regard Jewish history as a prison sentence that is not yet over. The various contributors to *Bilan Juif*, referred to above, are witnesses that very lively and positive conceptions of the Jewish past exist in France today.

Jewish history belongs to all Jews; most Frenchmen possess only a portion of theirs—at least, so a socialist should insist. This implies no advantage—perhaps the less history the better. At any rate, French history as the history of the worker goes back only to 1789. At that point another France appears, in the story of which he has no part. The French worker cannot hear the story of aristocratic France, its court, its clergy, its great men, without recognizing his own anonymity in it. From the Revolution backwards he has lost his identity—he does not embody the France of feudalism. He cannot say as

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Roosevelt did: "Let us not forget that we are all descendants from revolutionaries and poor immigrants." The ultra-nationalist and anti-Semite attempts to bridge the subjective gap between the two Frances, of before and after 1789. Even putting aside Marx's contention that "the workers have no fatherland," Sartre should be concerned as a socialist with denying history to the French workingman or with limiting it to the France of the Revolution. Instead, it is of the French Jews that he makes the unfounded and brutal observation: "These are Frenchmen who have no part in the history of France."

TO REINFORCE his notion that anti-Semitism provides the exclusive content of Jewishness, Sartre claims that the Jews "cannot take pride in any collective work that is specifically Jewish." If he means a national style of architecture or of painting, he is undoubtedly correct. If he means a Jewish post-office system or a Jewish army, he *was* correct. There is, of course, a fairly large literature that is "specifically Jewish," and the world is becoming increasingly aware of Jewish philosophical and mystical thinking throughout the centuries. Sartre is either ignorant of, or indifferent to, all this. I shall, therefore, mention one collective work of which he must be aware—I mean the Jewish creation of a unique type of human being, the "Jewish intellectual," who springs from the tradition of *talmid hacham,* the life-long student. For two thousand years the main energies of Jewish communities in various parts of the world have gone into the mass production of intellectuals. From among these have emerged several noble traditional figures: the pure-minded judge, the scholarly man of affairs, the poverty-loving saint. I estimate this enterprise of the Jews to be as civilized and "historical" as the catching of herring to which the Dutch devoted themselves in their great period, or the production of cotton by the British. True, the Jewish output of intellectuals was not a "planned" project and often resulted in surpluses. This occurs in any one-crop or one-product economy, and peanut growers or pottery makers then experience a crisis. When the Jews began to "export" their major commodity in the nineteenth century, they found themselves competing against "home products." While this is, of course, not all there is to modern anti-Semitism, its peculiarly odious form of "protectionism" attests to "the collective work that is specifically Jewish."

The unique "culture heroes" created by Jewish communities continue to live in the imagination and memories of individual Jews. They play their part in that "mystical and pre-logical feeling of kinship" among Jews which to Sartre is but a reaction to a common history of humiliation. If the Western Jew is, as Sartre claims, a "haunted man" (the term is rather melodramatic), whose life is a doubling of self-disguise and self-scrutiny, it is by the sweetness and metaphysical security of his sages that he is haunted and by the sense of treachery and degradation that overcomes him when he wills to renounce such grandfathers, rather than by the opaque eye of the anti-Semite.

THE Jew, Sartre maintains, having no original existence, has his identity to create. He will "make" himself by his choices in his present anti-Semitic situation. The Jew can either consciously become what this situation demands that he be and, "accepting it in pride and humiliation," attain "authenticity." Or he can strive, futilely, to evade his situation and make himself "inauthentic."

In that it seems to offer us a clear choice in dealing with anti-Semitism—to stand our ground come what may, or waste our lives in fruitless ruses of disguise and escape—Sartre's formulation has a tonic quality. The lens of the anti-Semite is permanently trained upon us, it will not allow us to be anything but Jews. We cannot dare to pretend that it is not there; we must decide how we shall behave under this scrutiny.

Were "authentic" and "inauthentic" simply different ways of confronting anti-Semitism, we could have no objection. But Sartre

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is not offering a choice in action. In fact, he feels that the Jew can do little about anti-Semitism, and in general "his situation is such that everything he does turns against him." What is left to the Jew is the choice of *being* "authentic," that is, of accepting himself as the creature of anti-Semitism and nothing else. Let this be clear—not choosing to *do* but choosing to *be*. Nor is it to be Orthodox or a Zionist or openly a Jew in any specific manner. It means ceasing voluntarily to be a man: "the authentic Jew *makes himself a Jew* in the face of all and against all" (his italics). He proudly becomes what the anti-Semite says he is, for "he knows himself and wills himself into history as a historic and damned creature." Not only does he accept the hatred and disgust of his neighbors; he makes himself what they hate and despise.

Naturally, most Jews reject this choice. Some write philosophical works like Bergson, novels like Proust, create mathematical theories like Einstein—in a word, they behave as if they were men in a world, not reflections in the glass of anti-Semitism. According to Sartre, such gestures of belonging to the human race render them "inauthentic." They amount to falsifying their natures and "being ashamed of their own kind." These Jews develop the characteristics of people who are permanently in flight from the truth and from themselves. Sartre's inauthentic Jew is a quivering, self-conscious creature, anxiously hiding his inescapable Jewishness or masochistically embracing it as degradation. This Jew is a rationalist without intuitions or spontaneity; he is tactless, acquisitive, denies his very body, etc. Sartre is careful to tell us that it is only the "inauthentic" Jew that he has thus portrayed. But it turns out that this painful and, in large part, repulsive figure is none other than *the* Jew, because very few people are authentic and those that are contribute nothing to Sartre's image, since, as he tells us, the authentic man "escapes description."

In short, on the basis of his authentic-inauthentic conception, Sartre has consciously permitted himself to accept the anti-Semite's stereotype of the Jew. His disagreement with anti-Semitism reduces itself to arguing that these Jewish traits which he enumerates are not so bad; besides, not the Jew himself but the anti-Semite is responsible for the Jew and his character. Though about this responsibility for the Jew he is not altogether certain, since it seems to him that it was "by taking advantage of certain aspects of the conduct of inauthentic Jews that the anti-Semite has forged his general mythology of the Jew." If this is the case, the behavior of Jews, of most Jews, provides the material for the anti-Semitic caricature.

THE fallacy in Sartre's notion of "authentic" and "inauthentic," which results in such profound distortions, may be traced to his erroneous conception of a "situation." "Authenticity," Sartre tells us, "consists in having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation, in assuming the responsibilities and risks involved, in accepting it in pride and humiliation, sometimes in horror and hate." Can one have a "true and lucid consciousness" of his situation? Only if "situation" is defined in terms of external relations. I can be conscious that I am an American, a Jew, a husband, a father. But to Sartre, one's self is part of the situation. Therefore to know my situation I must know myself. I must have solved the Socratic problem. But if we Jews strove to arrive at such a consciousness of our situation and of ourselves we should surely develop that "almost continuously reflective attitude" which for Sartre is "the first trait" of the inauthentic Jew. If like Socrates, Pascal, Hamlet, Kierkegaard, we really attempted to reach a "true and lucid consciousness" of ourselves, we should not attain to authenticity at all but merely demonstrate to Sartre that we are inauthentic Jews.

Here again Sartre, attempting to leap from instrumentalism to subjectivity, falls into an abyss. The choice between being authentic or inauthentic has to do not with any specific historical or social condition in which one may find oneself but with one's meta-

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physical situation, with the fact of being alive as a unique individual. In the particular situation we cannot *choose* ourselves, since our action in it is the means by which we *discover* ourselves. Could Oedipus, while still unconscious of his origin, have chosen himself and achieved authenticity by "assuming the risks and responsibilities" of his situation as king, father, husband? The distinction between choosing to be oneself and choosing not to be oneself was made by Kierkegaard. But to Kierkegaard both to choose to be oneself and to choose not to be oneself are *forms of despair,* not of authenticity and inauthenticity. The Jew who wills to make himself nothing-but-a-Jew (and as a Jew nothing) does not thereby become more authentic than the Jew who wills not to be a Jew. Both have taken the way of despair, since they have willed to transform themselves from what they are, as given, into what they conceive the situation to demand them to be. They are guilty of the Sartrian fallacy of imagining that they have a total knowledge of the situation and can therefore, like God, create the "being" in it.

THERE *is* a situation in which a man's choices appear to "make" him entirely, instead of altering what was given by his origin and his past: the concentration-camp situation. Sartre's categories of authentic and inauthentic apply to the concentration-camp victim. He has been deprived of his identity; his entire past has been wiped out; he was born again "in horror and hate" upon the closing of the gate. Starting in nothingness, he will make himself by his choices in his situation, of which he can have a "true and lucid consciousness," since its limits and those of his existence in it are visible from moment to moment. The prisoner, the pure human Nobody, is restricted to authentic and inauthentic, an adjective without a noun.

This concentration-camp vision of beginning one's life anew within a situation imposed by others is primary in Sartre's metaphysics. It has a traumatic fixity in him; it also inspires him. I suspect it came upon him with the force of a religious conversion during the Occupation. It is *the* Sartrian situation, decorated with a "no-exit" sign, and inhabited not by "concrete syntheses" but by the watched and the watchers, the prisoners and the guards.

Sartre's Jew is a personification of the man in the camp, and it is as a concentration-camp drama that his study of the Jew hangs together. First appears the anti-Semite, murderous lord of a "total" world.* Even when he does not kill outright, his ultimate intent is to slay. His victim, the Jew, like the concentration-camp prisoner, has no history because he was cut off from it; he is nothing but what his guards have made of him. His life is a choice between trying to hide this fact from himself through philosophizing or dreaming or making plans like other men—

* For all his viciousness and "mediocrity," Sartre's anti-Semite is more human than his Jew. True, the anti-Semite is "inauthentic," in that instead of a true consciousness of his situation he interprets his miseries as caused by Jewish malevolence. Yet he is a man of passionate conviction and has the glamor and initiative of one who has made "a total choice of himself and the meaning of the world"—while the Jew, no matter what he does, thinks or feels, is degraded and impotent.

Concentrating on his sentimental image of the "passionate" anti-Semite, Sartre fails to consider a type much more menacing historically: the anti-Semitic conspirator. This anti-Semite may be quite lacking in the "passion" and the concept of the world of the anti-Semite in Sartre's portrait (Sartre might have called him the "authentic" anti-Semite, since he is conscious of his situation, and of the uses of anti-Semitism in it). In a given historical situation this cold manipulator of anti-Semitism may prove far more deadly than Sartre's "Manichean" and folklorist. Robert Pick's observation (COMMENTARY, September 1948) that the fatal point in the development of anti-Semitism occurs when it receives encouragement from above seems to touch the essence of the problem. The Jew is truly endangered when different forms of anti-Semitism come together and achieve the power to act. Sartre is unaware of this turning point, since for him the Jew is always a marked man. Thus he fails to distinguish between the regime of the yellow star and the normal environment of the Jew in Western democracies. "The Nazi ordinances," he says, "only carried to its extreme a situation to which we had formerly accommodated ourselves very well." But the very life of the Jew depends on distinguishing sharply between a situation in which he will be killed if he arouses someone's hostility and one in which his enemy can only try to injure him through prejudice or disdain.

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or assuming the situation and the existence that the camp has imposed upon him. It is peculiar to Sartre's philosophy that the latter choice means to recover one's humanity and one's "freedom" in the very degradation which he accepts. But free or not, the Jew will not alter his fate by becoming "authentic"; his situation "is such that everything he does turns against him." Nor will authenticity establish for him any connection with the "outside" world of humanity: his choice must be "in the face of all and against all." For the point is that there is no Jew on this side of the walls where human beings dwell. The sole Jewish fact is the camp of the anti-Semite. Under the circumstances the Jew would have but one goal—to get out. He would assimilate to anything, for outside are human beings—and what imprisoned nothing does not dream of becoming *any* human being? But assimilation, escape, is not possible. First the camp has to be removed by the acts of the good men outside (all Gentiles).

THE above is a synopsis of Sartre's *Reflections* in terms of the image behind his analysis. When Sartre says "Jew" he means someone else, the prisoner. For instance, the Jew to him, like the camp inmate, feels solidarity only with those who have suffered the same experience—no fraternity is possible with outsiders. Were he not carried away by his fantasy, could Sartre have made the following dreadful statement? "In effect the Jew is to another Jew the only man to whom he can say 'we'." If this were true the most destructive accusations of the anti-Semite would be justified. Unable to enter into community with non-Jews for whatever reason, the Jew would deserve to be shunned. A Jew in a trade union whose "we" was weaker than his brother's; a Jew on a baseball team, a Jew in a political party or a military squad, with his "we" restricted to the other Jews in it, would deserve to be kicked out, at least. This person without a positive historical tie to his fellow Jews would yet be fused to them in rejecting humanity—one almost detects here the leer of the Elders of Zion munching their conspiratorial matzot.

But we need not be shocked because Sartre is not really talking about the Jew at all but about his favorite theme, the concentration-camp situation and the man in it, a man hopelessly cut off from the world and subjected to the behavior of his enemies. We see this most clearly in Sartre's discussion of Bergson. The world thinks of Bergson as a philosopher of intuition. Benda, a Jew, attacked Bergson as the demiurge of modern irrationalism and the type of the "musical Jew" who scorns rationality. But Jews, say the anti-Semites, are incapable of intuition; they are all just clever rationalists. Yes, Sartre agrees, the anti-Semites have made rationalists of the Jews. Since Bergson is a Jew his "system is a rationalism that has undergone a change of name." (Not a bad characterization of Sartre's Existentialism, by the way.) "For my part, I see it as the supreme defense of the persecuted." Spinoza and Husserl, too, are rationalists in spite of themselves. Bergson, among other inauthentic Jews, thought as he did, and what he did, because he was defending himself against a "true and lucid consciousness" of his Jewish situation. His philosophy is an inutile attempt to say "we" with all mankind when he could only really say "we" with Jews. Bergson's entire intellectual life—which Valéry hailed during the Occupation as the quintessence of French thought, in contrast to the system-building of the German philosophers—this entire life is to Sartre but a symbolic activity designed to conceal from Bergson himself the impermeable fact of his Jewishness. Jews are incapable of metaphysics—"metaphysics is the special privilege of the 'Aryan' governing classes"—they can only defend themselves. At this point the Existentialist philosophy of freedom, dominated by its terrible dream, has dropped far below the deepest cellars of psychological and historical determinism. Even the most rigid Freudian sees the source of a writer's involuntary fictiveness in some private fact that may be changed through consciousness; while the most mechanical Marxist regards

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an individual's thought as compelled by the broad movement of world history. For Sartre, Bergson is moved neither by himself nor by the world. He is locked into a middle area, the Jewish situation. And yet he is moved absolutely, for that is what he *is*. "Whatever he does, his course is set for him . . . . He cannot choose not to be a Jew."

Here are some other characteristics of the inauthentic Jew. He is uneasy, but his uneasiness is social rather than metaphysical (in the camp anguish comes not from God or the universe but from society). He is not a surrealist, for he does not believe in destructiveness (destruction has chosen him as its victim). He feels himself forever surrounded by others; no Jew can "perceive the loneliness of each man in a silent universe" (in the camp one never has the chance to be alone). Let Sartre poll Paris today to see how many Frenchmen are secure, metaphysical, surrealist, and in love with solitude. The irony is, however, that Sartre himself, precisely because the concentration camp is central to his thought, is outstandingly anxious, rationalistic, lacking in the metaphysical sense, opposed to surrealism and "disengaged" poetry, and conceives every situation as a purely social one. (I am not suggesting that he is secretly a Jew.)

Those "Jewish traits" collected by Sartre which are not directly deducible from the concentration-camp situation belong to the modern city man, Gentile or Jew, as he appears in the perspective of nostalgia. For instance, Sartre comments about the Jews that "they do not feel toward their bodies that tranquil sentiment of property which characterizes most 'Aryans.' For these latter the body is a fruit of French soil." One recalls what D. H. Lawrence had to say about the "tranquil" physicalness of the "Aryans." Sartre's remarks are in the tradition of 20th-century ideologists of "aristocracy." Like them he ascribes to the Jew, regardless of class or locality, the personality of the big-city bourgeois ("he prefers this form of property [commodities] to all others . . . because it is universal") seen in contrast with the sentimentalized peasant. This identification of the Jew and the cosmopolitan plays an enormous role in modern anti-Semitism.

In sum, Sartre's inauthentic Jew is a fiction justified neither by philosophy, history, nor direct observation. Not that there are no Jews who have psychological qualities mentioned by Sartre. Jews in the United States may recognize them as typical of the assimilationist who nervously tries to "lose himself in the Christian world." And they will approve Sartre's moral enjoinder to this harassed man: Be a Jew, be yourself, whatever the cost. But in the midst of our approval let us remember that we cannot agree with Sartre (and with the assimilationist) that the Jew is nothing but anti-Semite bait. This is a distortion common to Gentile friends of the Jew. To them the Jew is one who against his will is kept from being a "man like everybody else" by the anti-Semite, who includes every *goy* who has not made anti-anti-Semitism his vocation. We have had several recent examples of such humanitarian exuberance. But here in America, where Jews are not the only "foreigners," nor the only target of racialism, it should be clear that being singled out by an enemy is not the cause of our difference from others, is not what makes us Jews.

In opposition to Sartre's compendium of Jewish nothingness, Jewish imprisonment in his situation, and Jewish traits we may assert the following: Since the Jew possesses a unique identity which springs from his origin and his story, it is possible for him to be any kind of man—rationalist, irrationalist, heroic, cowardly, Zionist or good European—and still be a Jew. The Jew exists but there are no Jewish traits. The Jew who chooses to flee his Jewishness does not thereby turn into something other than a man, any more than an Italian who decides to become an American. Whatever it is, the desire to assimilate is not "inauthentic"; one may choose to suppress the past in oneself or to surpass it. On the other hand, the Jewish identity has a remarkable richness for those who rediscover it within themselves.

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THE "JOINT" TAKES A HUMAN INVENTORY

The End of the DP Problem Is in Sight

HAL LEHRMAN

PARIS

WITH the State of Israel an accomplished fact and the peak of the overseas emergency relief program now passed, the Joint Distribution Committee has felt the need to take stock as of 1948, to review the past and weigh the future. Accordingly, in mid-November, two hundred and fifty delegates and observers of thirty-one recipient and donor countries met with representatives of the JDC and eleven cooperating organizations on the Left Bank in Paris for a world "Conference on Jewish Relief and Rehabilitation."

When Nazi Germany in the spring of 1945 yielded to the combined persuasion of Allied armies converging from West and East, she left a monument of six million Jewish corpses. Only 1,400,000 European Jews remained after the crematories and gas-chambers capitulated, and better than half of these survivors were literally more dead than alive. Whatever breath they still were drawing seemed likely to be quite shut off by disease and hunger and the indifference of a war-ravaged continent with urgent problems of its own. As for the religious and social institutions by which European Jewry had sustained its vigorous identity in happier times, most lay in apparently irretrievable ruin. Not one organized Jewish community survived in all the lands from which the Nazis had been freshly purged.

Into this desolation came the American Joint Distribution Committee, nearly 95 per cent of its funds donated by the Jews of the United States and the remainder by the Jews of Latin America and the British Commonwealth—the Jews who had been lifted by the accidents of history beyond the reach of the German design. It is perhaps not exact to say that the JDC came into this desolation, for the Joint had been on the outskirts of the holocaust since 1940, working to rescue ten Jews here, a hundred Jews there, and a thousand somewhere else, as Hitler's armies advanced and receded. Rather, the Joint turned from the crisis of rescue to the crisis of salvage and rehabilitation.

Three and one-half years later, the plain statistics tell a great story. More than two hundred million dollars have been expended, 900 communities have been restored, 210,000 Jews have been helped to emigrate, 141,000 of them to Palestine—or, later, Israel. Of the 150,000 Jewish children still alive in Europe at the end of the war, no less than 140,000 have been taken care of by the JDC. Over 300 child-care and 500 medical institutions are operating, as well as 256 producers' cooperatives and 41 loan banks. Vocational institutes have given work-training to 135,000 Jews,

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As victorious Allied troops advanced into Hitler's Europe, the American Joint Distribution Committee, seasoned by nearly three decades of experience, was on hand to bring the first promise of rehabilitation to the Jews who remained alive. Today, more than three years after the war's end, the "Joint" continues its enormous task of bringing constructive aid to distressed Jews everywhere in the world. HAL LEHRMAN here reports on a recent international conference on Jewish relief and rehabilitation sponsored by the JDC, reviewing the accomplishments of the past, drawing a balance sheet of present needs, and looking toward new problems which may require substantial readjustment of overseas relief activity. Mr. Lehrman, well-known political analyst, is the author of *Russia's Europe*, and contributed a series of internationally-discussed articles on the changing Palestine diplomatic situation to our pages. He was born in New York City in 1911 and attended Cornell University.

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85,000 students have attended Jewish schools, 400 synagogues have been rebuilt. The Joint has shipped nearly 200,000,000 pounds of relief supplies overseas, including 154,000,000 pounds of food, 750,000 pairs of new shoes, 1,400,000 pairs of socks, 500,000 new coats, 250,000 new suits, 300,000 new dresses, and 2,000,000 pieces of underwear. Some 2,600,000 cases have been treated in Joint-subsidized clinics, and 42,000,000 hot meals have been distributed in Joint-supported canteens and soup kitchens. The performance of the JDC as a private, voluntary agency has set a new mark in the peacetime history of international social service.

ON THE first day of the Conference, the crystal-chandeliered, gilt-tinted Grande Salle de Bellechasse in the Palais d'Orsay blazed with floodlights as movie cameramen and photographers recorded the proceedings. There was a welcome address from JDC Chairman Edward M. M. Warburg. In Churchillian periods Major Aubrey Eban, chief Israeli representative to the United Nations, denounced Britain's "attempt to detach two-thirds of the territory of Israel," saluted the Negev "as the future home of half a million Jews," and invited Israel's Arab "neighbors" to direct negotiations for "final determination of frontiers." Dr. Joseph J. Schwartz, JDC European Director, who had in eight years of tireless labor made the name of the Joint a synonym for salvation from Lisbon to Istanbul, reviewed the achievements of and for European Jewry since liberation and briefly surveyed the problems still seeking solution. Then, with Dr. Schwartz as permanent chairman, the conference settled down to five days of discussion guided by five major agenda topics: emigration, welfare and child care, health, new areas of need, and reconstruction.

The week's deliberations had an amiable informality undisturbed by caucuses, resolutions or votes. There were not even any motions or, in fact, any standard rules of procedure except a rare tap of the chairman's gavel. No effort was made in advance to weigh the various delegations according to size and importance; the United States had only three delegates, no more than Hungary, while Austria had five and Israel two. Debate and division on resolutions would have been entirely meaningless. The purpose of the Conference was to exchange views, not to legislate—it being generally difficult to decree the disposition of someone else's funds.

As the days went by, one became increasingly aware that the Conference could be described, without derogatory intention, less as a parliament than as a Wailing Wall. For the first time since the Nazi blight had descended upon them, the spokesmen of decimated European Jewry were given the opportunity to relate their *tsoros* (the Conference's official language was Yiddish) in plenary assembly. The catharsis was complete and wholesome. But in addition the disjointed branches of the Jewish family, so long separated by death and destruction, now were able to reaffirm their kinship with each other and with the new and ancient Israel. As they talked, day after day, a feeling of harmony steadily grew—certain delegates from the "popular democracies" of Eastern Europe apart.

NATURALLY, there were also grievances. Delegates from some of the donating countries complained, among other things, about duplication of cost and effort between the Joint and other agencies, about the need for training local personnel instead of stocking the far-flung Joint offices with expensively imported American professionals, about the tendency of emigrants already settled in one haven to use the Joint as a free "travel bureau," about the general belief among European Jews that the Joint's resources were inexhaustible—verily a *"yam mit gelt."* In turn, the delegates from receiving countries complained that they sometimes did not get sufficient money for projects which they considered eminently worthy, that the Joint did not do enough for propagation of Jewish religious life (or did too much for it), that the Joint meddled in politics (or failed to meddle in politics), and so on. To this

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writer, as to any other correspondent who has reported from Middle Europe since the war, the chronicle of grievances was already classically familiar.

Rising high above the note of annoyance, however, was the nearly universal chorus of praise and gratitude for the Joint and all its works. The gentlemen from Poland and Czechoslovakia were careful to qualify their admiration by giving even louder voice to the "benefactions" showered on the Jewish community by their respective "democratic" regimes. The gentlemen from Sofia likewise intimated at frequent intervals that the advent of Georgi Dimitrov's Communist era had been the most blessed event in the history of Bulgarian Jewry. For the rest, however, delegation after delegation affirmed and reiterated that it had been the Joint, and nothing but the Joint, which had come speedily, generously, and effectively to their side in every moment of distress, and that without the Joint neither they nor their constituencies would have sufficient strength or life to make any complaints at all. Not only did almost every speaker embroider this theme but many rose to refute minor reservations made by a previous speaker or some criticism overheard in the lobby (for this Conference, like all international assemblies, had its lobby too, where at least as much conferring went on as inside the hall).

The prevailing sentiment seemed to be that the JDC had perpetrated no more sins of omission and commission than any comparable organization of its size and diversity was entitled to, and probably less. In the final speech of the Conference, Dr. Schwartz expressed his mild surprise at the relatively small amount of criticism. If it had been up to him, he assured the delegates, he could have thought of a considerably larger number of complaints to be charged against his organization. Authoritatively but tactfully, and with an extemporaneous eloquence in Yiddish which quite fulfilled its claim to the dignity of an international language, he took up each major criticism in turn and gave a reasoned reply. He noted, for instance, that the Joint was neither for nor against encouragement of the purely religious phases of Jewish rehabilitation but simply supported those religious or non-religious cultural projects which the various Jewish communities themselves desired; that in the whole of JDC's European staff there were only some two hundred Americans and more than four thousand paid local employes; that JDC's overlapping of function with HIAS, with ORT, with Union-OSE or any other welfare group was far less extensive than advertised; that coordination for its own sake was not necessarily an unmitigated virtue, the main thing being to get the job done; that nevertheless a serious effort was being made to work out a common plan of action with the other agencies; that the Joint's much-bruited disagreements with the World Jewish Congress were considerably exaggerated, the WJC having stated its intention to stay out of relief work and the Joint having reaffirmed its determination, as always, to stay out of politics. When he concluded his remarks, the Conference gave Dr. Schwartz a standing ovation.

THE Schwartz speech, listed on the agenda as a "resumé" of the Conference's proceedings, was really an official, basic statement of the JDC's present program and future prospects. For two days after Conference adjournment, the directors of the Joint's world-wide regional offices met six hours daily to study mutual problems and receive new instructions. From these discussions and the Schwartz survey—and from numerous private talks with competent sources—the following salient conclusions emerge:

1. Emigration is the major target. The DP camps are to have first priority, the Moslem countries second. The situation in the DP camps will be liquidated within twelve months. The largest part of the emigration will flow toward Israel, some to the United States, with a trickle to other territories.

2. Eastern Europe will continue to get help. Every effort will be made to assist the emigration of all Jews who want and are

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able to get out of countries in the Soviet orbit. But those who want or have to remain will not be written off the JDC rolls. An estimated three years will be required for their readjustment.

3. Emphasis in relief and rehabilitation is to shift from Europe to the Moslem lands, especially North Africa. First objectives there are children and young people, their health and education. JDC allocations for North Africa and the Middle East will be two and one-half times greater next year than this.

4. To do a complete job overseas in 1949, the JDC needs $70,000,000. This is about $28,000,000 less than the Joint asked for in 1948—but more, it is feared, than the coming fund-raising campaign in the United States may provide.

WHATEVER the abundance or scarcity of dollars for overseas, emigration is Priority No. 1. Thirty per cent of the JDC's current budget goes to emigration. This percentage will continue and even increase; only a complete drying-up of funds can force revision of this policy.

No matter what the destination selected by the individual migrant, the fixed principle and purpose of the JDC will be to help him reach it. But the fact is that Israel is the haven that most Jews are choosing and the one most ready and eager to receive them. In the past ten months, 85,000 have gone there. Thirty thousand have entered in the past three months, an average of 10,000 monthly, and this average is soon expected to reach 15,000. The Israeli government, through the Jewish Agency, is cooperating fully and efficiently in the granting of visas and the expediting of travel. (An example of record speed was set recently in the issuance of Israeli visas to 5,000 refugee Jews marooned in Shanghai as Chinese Communist armies swept southward.)

Apart from the over-all problems of economic absorptivity, immigration into Israel is currently hampered by a severe housing shortage. That it is not crippling is due to the accessibility of houses and areas evacuated by the fleeing Arabs during the recent hostilities. Fifteen thousand immigrant Jews have been installed in deserted Jaffa. More have found shelter in the Arab parts of Haifa, and others are being sent on to the nearly empty towns of Acre, Safed, and Tiberias. Some minor construction has been done but neither the skilled manpower nor the materials for large-scale building is available at the moment.

Nevertheless a flood of immigration will not only be permitted but encouraged for the plain and simple reason that the new State of Israel vitally needs a population. The political realities of the situation push aside the economic realities. Israel is hungry for people. People to go into Upper Galilee, people to colonize the Negev, people to occupy Lydda and Ramleh. And all these places must be filled and securely settled as rapidly as possible.

In this enterprise the JDC is cooperating to the limits of its ability. The urgency, responsible Joint officials feel, is not so much Zionist as Jewish. "Once in the history of every people," Dr. Schwartz told the Paris Conference, "it is given the opportunity to build itself a home. We cannot and will not neglect the opportunity in Israel." The JDC is convinced that the Jews of the Old World need the guarantee of a homeland in Israel, and that the Jews of the New World, whatever their private political views, will applaud the use of their donations in supplying Israel with the men and women needed to consolidate its future.

EDWARD WARBURG pledged the Conference that the DP's henceforth would be known as DI's—"Destined for Israel." The phrase applies, at least, to those displaced persons in Austria, Germany, and Italy who are physically qualified for admission to Israel. There are in Germany today approximately 112,000 Jewish refugees, 23,000 more in Austria, and 10,000 in Italy—a total of 145,000. Among these are the aged, who have to stand back because Tel Aviv is giving priority to the more productive categories; the tubercular, who with their families

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account for six or seven thousand in the non-emigrable group; partisan fighters and soldiers who lost limbs or were otherwise incapacitated during the war; and the chronically ill. The current rate of emigration to Israel is six thousand per month, and all signs indicate that this figure will soon rise to 7,500.

If this is so, 90,000 will depart within the next year. During the same period the emigration to the United States, even under the present unsatisfactory legislation, plus the foreseeable trickle to Canada and Australia, ought to account for another 10,000 departures. In effect, therefore, the displaced-persons problem in Middle Europe will be solved by the end of 1949.

This will not solve the problem for the whole of Europe, however. In France, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, and Switzerland there are another 25,000 Jewish refugees in need of resettlement. If they seek it in Israel, they will be required to wait their turn until the camps have been emptied. For them (and for those in the camps to whom Israel is barred for reasons of age or incapacity) a quicker way out would be to an overseas territory.

Latin America, which was fairly liberal with its visas last year, has since become steadily less hospitable. The condition may improve, but right now the doors of the Southern continent are practically shut. The maximum estimated possibility of Jewish emigration to Australia by the end of 1949 is 6,400, to Canada only 3,000. The likeliest destination is the United States. Although the 1948 Immigration Law authorized the entry of 205,000 DP's to the United States, its discriminatory language cut the Jewish immigration permissible under it to 20,000 and it is doubtful whether even that many will be able to get past our vigilant consulates abroad. However, President Truman and other Democratic party spokesmen repeatedly assailed the law's anti-Semitic overtones during the recent campaign. Unless political oratory means nothing at all, the White House and the incoming Democratic Congress may be confidently expected to amend the law in favor of increased Jewish refugee immigration.

IN EASTERN EUROPE, inhabited by more than 700,000 Jews, JDC's life is complicated not only by the problem of finding places for emigrants to go to but by the uncertainty of getting the emigrants out of the places where they are now.

True, at the moment of writing the various Soviet-satellite regimes are being rather cooperative in facilitating Jewish exit. Contrary to suggestions by the British Foreign Office and other sources, this does not prove that the Jews are Communist agents sent out to establish fifth columns abroad. On the contrary, it indicates that Jews are eager to put distance between themselves and the "people's democracies." It also suggests that the governments in the area are glad to be relieved of responsibility for protection of large numbers of Jews against the anti-Semitism of the native populations. As this writer can testify from direct observation, even those Jews in Eastern Europe who have taken on the Communist label are "Communists" only for convenience, and demonstrate their real convictions by flocking en masse to register on Zionist emigration rolls. And it is illuminating to note that in Rumania, the only East European country where emigration is now at a standstill, the deadlock exists because the "official" Jewish Communists, representing the government, insist on the right of "selecting" the Jews eligible for emigration and the Zionists refuse to let them.

In the rest of Russia's Europe, emigration is admittedly easier at the moment. But there are ominous signs, and an imminent turn for the worse is widely feared. The Zionists in Prague were operating camps in which twenty-three hundred Jews of military age—now on the verge of departure—received "training for productive life" in Israel. But the Czechoslovak government has suddenly barred further recruiting and ordered the camps to close. The Prague practise of granting passports to large groups is being suspended. Clearances will be given

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only to individual applicants, which inevitably means a drastic cut.

In Yugoslavia, while four thousand have just departed, there is no hint of accommodation for the 6,000 who still remain. Although a few thousand may be expected to leave Poland, Warsaw has lately tightened its passport policy, intimating that foreign Jewish funds might better be applied toward aiding those particular Jews who desire to consecrate themselves to the task of building the Polish "people's democracy." Hungary, which has 160,000 Jews, has agreed to let a slim 2,000 go, but only on an individual basis. From Bulgaria some 11,000 Jews have departed since Liberation, and perhaps 15,000 more may get out by early 1949. But at least 20,000 will have to stay; even apart from the fact that scarcely a Jewish family in Bulgaria is without relatives already in Israel, there is excellent ground to believe that only a fraction of these will remain out of sheer devotion to the new Bulgarian republic.

Why is satellite policy toward emigration changing? One reason, according to private reports, is that the Jewish exodus has been stirring unrest among the non-Jewish populations. Many Gentile citizens of the new democracies would also like to take leave of Eastern Europe, and are encouraged by the Jewish example to hope that some day their chance will come too. Also, significant signs are visible of growing Soviet discontent with political developments in Israel itself. A recent article by the Moscow weathervane, Ilya Ehrenburg, which was anything but gracious about Israeli trends, was widely reproduced in the satellite press—this phenomenon never occurs by accident. Finally, pressure is probably coming from the handful of dyed-in-the-wool professional Jewish Communists who see their "constituencies" dwindling and are worried that continued emigration will deprive them of their self-appointed "leadership" of the nonexistent "revolutionary Jewish masses."

SOME of these "leaders" turned up at the Paris Conference and brought with them that rare "democratic" mentality which has become *de rigueur* eastward of the Trieste-Stettin line. The delegations were of two distinct categories. In the first were the bona fide Jewish community representatives of pre-war vintage, men retained because of their usefulness as window dressing but divested of all independence. I recognized the delegate from Yugoslavia. Even as far back as 1945, he was too intimidated to give me anything but official slogans when I visited him in Belgrade. This time I refrained from embarrassing him with conversation. The Hungarians, too, were represented by three pre-war community spokesmen, for the Orthodox, Neologue (Conservative), and Zionist groups. Nobody who knows how matters stand in Eastern Europe could resent the cautious platitudes they uttered at the Conference. For them the gamble must be like the one taken by the Persian Jew who was forced to agree to forfeit his head unless he could make the Shah's cat talk, but obtained a year's respite to accomplish it. When asked why he was risking the impossible he replied: "In a year I may die anyway. The Shah may die. Even the cat may die. Who knows what can happen in a year?"

The Rumanian delegation fell into no category, because it never got to Paris at all, for reasons which remain obscure. But the rest of the contingents from Russia's Europe were eminently characteristic of the New Order. All of them were inveterate Communists, and practically all had "spontaneously" associated themselves with the Jewish communities only since the Communist grab of power.

As if to show the latest fashion in Communist manners, Czechoslovakia, the newest democracy, sent two delegates who alternated between sneering and scowling in the Conference hall and swaggering in the lobby. One of them stayed mildly plastered through the entire week. He assured me affectionately that he was a Jew in name only and had come to the rescue of the Prague community only when its "reactionary" leaders were fleeing the country after the February "putsch." (I learned elsewhere that this worthy's previous participation in Jewish affairs had been in connection with an OSE health project,

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wherein he was actively disrupting the program when the Communist coup raised him to higher things.) One of the two Bulgarian delegates, with whom I had had some vigorous exchanges in Sofia two years previously concerning terroristic practices of the up-and-coming Communists, was now an important enough party stalwart to be in charge of all housing in Sofia, a post equivalent to vice-lord mayor of the capital. The chief of the Warsaw delegation was no less than the brother of Jacob Berman, reputed to be the real boss of Poland. Perhaps the most pertinent address delivered by any East European spokesman came from one of Berman's colleagues, on the subject of emigration. Israel is fine for those who want to go there, he said, but it should not seduce good workers from their democratic labors in Poland. The slogan "Out of Europe" is false. The slogan of Polish Jewry ought to be "Fight"—fight against Polish fascism and build anew in Europe under the benevolent aegis of the Soviet Union. Not only Poland's Jews but all Jews everywhere should join hands in support of the USSR, the greatest force in the world for reconstruction and for peace.

In his urbane opening remarks to the conference, "Doctor Schwartz of the Joint" emphatically thanked the satellite regimes for their cooperative attitude on emigration. It was a tongue-in-cheek acknowledgment. The regimes in question certainly know that a great many Jews have managed to depart without benefit of passport. It also turned out to be a kind of diplomatic finesse, because Dr. Schwartz immediately tacked onto his thanks a pointed appeal for "continuation" of the alleged cooperation. The truth is that hard negotiations are now going on to talk the satellite governments out of clamping down on the exodus. Otherwise, there are only about three more months in which Jews may still be able to get out legally. Tel Aviv is especially concerned because plans are also under way for the resettlement in Israel of some 350,000 Jews from the Moslem lands. Israeli authorities want to have as many Jews of European background as possible in the country before the altogether different group of North African and Middle Eastern Jews arrives in quantity. It seems to them preferable to have the presently dominant Westernized strain in Israel absorb the Oriental newcomers, rather than be absorbed by them.

Throughout the Conference the delegate from Australia, a donating country, kept up a running word-battle with the East European delegations. He argued that in the "people's democracies" there was precious little that was either popular or democratic, that the Jews should consequently get out as quickly as possible, and that the Joint should not lavishly dispense its funds there or behave as if it were a "Marshall Plan" for Eastern Europe.

It must be reported that a good many delegates and observers from the more westerly countries listened sympathetically to the Australian's remarks. It is also true that the Joint would like nothing better than to help the emigration of every Jew from Eastern Europe who desired to leave, in which case that region would be virtually depopulated of Jews within the space of two years. But since this is not possible, the Joint considers that it cannot leave East Europe's Jews high and dry simply because the prevailing political outlook in that area may be repugnant. The JDC will refrain from cultural and long-term projects calculated to encourage the Jews to stay in Russia's Europe forever. But a limited three-year plan of "reconstruction"—based on vocational training, the final "tooling-up" of producers' cooperatives, and the final financing of loan societies—will be resolutely executed in the hope that those young Jews and economically displaced Jews who cannot get out of Eastern Europe will be given sufficient instruction and equipment to keep alive thereafter with a minimum of assistance from abroad.

As the emergency created in Europe by Hitler has abated, the plight of Jewry in the Moslem lands has advanced to the foreground, until the problem became a major topic on the agenda of the Paris

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conference. The fate of the Jews of Europe was dramatic and came upon them like a sudden, sweeping plague. The condition of a million Sephardic Jews in North Africa and the Middle East has been chronic, as untheatrical as the slow deadliness of consumption. The recent Palestine troubles exacerbated the condition by inflaming the Arabs in the surrounding countries (pogroms have already flared in Aden, Tripolitania, and Morocco) and by making the Jewish minorities more conscious of their agony. But the fundamental crisis has been there for centuries. In Algeria, under civilizing French influence, Jews enjoy full citizenship, but nearly everywhere else in the Moslem world (especially in Morocco, Tunisia, Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, Yemen, Aden, Iran, and Iraq) they are still in the Middle Ages.

I SHALL never forget my first glimpse, in 1943, of the Mellah—the ghetto—of Casablanca. The Jews there are indistinguishable from the Moroccans except by the color of the one-piece galabiyah which is all they have for clothing. If anything, their miseries are even greater than those of their Arab neighbors. For housing, the Jews of the Moslem countries inhabit hovels; without windows, doors, sun, air, or water; garbage, filth, and disease are omnipresent. One out of every four Jewish children alive at birth dies before the end of its first year. Typhus, typhoid, tuberculosis, favus, and rickets are endemic. Trachoma and conjunctivitis reap an appalling harvest in blindness. The general level of nutrition is hardly above the level of Auschwitz, and the level of sanitation is actually below it. When the bare facts of Oriental Jewish life were narrated at the Paris Conference, the shock was so acute that, then and there, delegates from the German and Austrian DP camps arose to urge that allocations for their own maintenance be cut in favor of relief for the depressed Jews of the Near East.

The JDC first began to take direct note of this ancient zone of Jewish suffering in 1940, when Joint installations were set up in Morocco for European Jews crossing North Africa in their flight from Hitler. The Alliance Israélite Universelle, subsidized by French government funds and private donations, was the only sizeable Jewish welfare group operating in the vast stretches between the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula and the borders of Afghanistan. Primarily educational in purpose, the ninety-year-old Alliance today runs more than one hundred schools dispersed through the Moslem world, including the fine agricultural institute of Mikveh Israel near Tel Aviv.

In the last few years, JDC has appropriated modest subsidies for the Alliance, but the latter's activity, excellent as far as it has gone, has barely scratched the surface of the problem. Its network of schools has a registration of 49,000 students—but there are 150,000 children of school age. OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants) has opened a few dispensaries—but only in Tunisia and Morocco. ORT, largely subsidized by Joint funds, operates vocational training schools in Algeria and Morocco—with a total enrollment of only 1,000 students. The JDC supports a few kindergartens in Tripoli and Tunis, and some school canteens—for only 12,000 children. In 1947, the JDC was able to allot only $500,000 to the less publicized crisis in the Moslem world. In 1948 this subvention was raised to $800,000—about one-hundreth of the total budgetary allotment for this year.

The Joint, at last able to reduce its European budget, now means to pay more attention to this newly discovered Mediterranean area of need. This does not mean, however, that next year's program will see any tremendous step-up in the size of the allocation. To begin with, hostile territories like the Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt will not even allow help for their Jewish minorities to come in from abroad. More important, although large amounts of money and personnel might be poured into European-controlled North Africa, no commensurate good could be accomplished by such an outlay. With the misery so vast and universal, the absymally backward native Jewish populations simply do not have the organization,

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conciousness or equipment to utilize a sudden deluge of funds.

The beginning, therefore, will be concentrated on the adults of the future, not of today. The stress will be on child feeding, medical care, primary school education, and vocational training—the latter with special emphasis on preparing the younger generations for useful lives either in their native countries or in Israel. It is expected that five years will be needed for substantial accomplishments to be recorded. JDC technicians have already made one welfare and two medical surveys and an educational survey is now in progress. Existing agencies like the Alliance and ORT will be utilized to the full. Where the Joint itself goes into the field, it will operate—as usual—through whatever local institutions exist. The ultimate design will be to raise the level of community awareness to a point where, at some future time, the local population will have the trained personnel, the installations, the capacity, and the desire to carry on for and by themselves.

THE BIG question-mark in the Joint's prospectus is the uncertainty of the response which American Jewry—long cooperative and long magnanimous—will give after the new appeal for contributions is sounded in 1949.

Even without the natural fatigue of purses stretched to meet the demands of the UJA campaign which is just closing—while it failed to raise the $250,000,000, it did achieve the unprecedented sum of $150,000,000—the trend is setting in heavily among American communities to look after their local welfare, religious, and educational institutions, which have been largely neglected in favor of the overseas crisis of war, relief, and rehabilitation. These demands may cut severely into allocations for disbursements abroad. Furthermore, the emergence of the State of Israel, while it has inspired American Jewry to contribute more generously than ever before, has also encouraged an anarchy of separatist appeals for funds and supplies. Since May 14, when Israel declared its sovereign independence, no less than fifty new American agencies, responsible or irresponsible, have requested licenses to conduct individual campaigns on behalf of the fledgling state. However excellent their intention, these groups threaten to reduce the efficiency and results of the previously unified UJA effort. Moreover, the intense enthusiasm for Israel is bound to bring pressure on the Joint to take less for overseas expenditures out of the UJA's 1949 treasury and leave more for direct aid to the newly-born Jewish homeland.

The JDC is asking for a smaller budget than last year and is preparing for possibly rigorous cuts wherever possible in maintenance of its own staffs overseas. Expenditures for child-care, canteens, cash relief grants, and similar projects are taking a natural downward turn as more and more clients become self-sufficient or are resettled outside of Europe. But slightly larger funds will be needed for the reconstruction program, and even more for the priority requirements of immigration. It costs an average of $120 to resettle one displaced person—which means close to $2,000,000 each month for resettlement alone out of the total JDC budget for this year of $70,000,000. It needs no argument to see that it would be an obvious disaster if the JDC, so near to the culmination of its errand of mercy and its restoration of a broken people, should be impeded in the final hours.

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SECRET JEWS OF PERSIA

A Century-Old Marrano Community in Asia

WALTER J. FISCHEL

OF THE sixty thousand Jews in Persia, most live in the large cities—Teheran, Hamadan, and others—with smaller groups in many towns and villages. By and large, they earn their living as merchants, peddlers, and handicraftsmen, and though some are wealthy, the majority share the generally low Oriental standard of living, besides suffering special disabilities because of their religion. As an escape, a number have recently become converted—some to Protestantism, many more to the Bahai creed.

Just at this time, ironically enough, the existence of a group of Persian "marranos" has been authenticated—that is, Jews who had been forcibly converted to Mohammedanism but who remained, in devious ways, faithful to the religion of their birth. (The term "marrano" was originally applied to the Spanish and Portuguese Jews who were forcibly converted to Christianity at the time of the Inquisition, but who secretly continued Jewish practices.) Documents and other materials, brought back from a personal visit, enable us now to piece together the story of these "neo-Moslems"—or, in Persian, "Jadid al-Islam"—who for more than a century have lived an uneasy dual existence.

ISLAM became the state religion in Persia in 641 CE, it will be remembered, when the country was conquered by the Arabs. However, it was not until the 16th century, when the Safawid dynasty established the Shia branch of Islam as the dominant official Persian religion, that the Jewish community in Persia was endangered. As compared to Sunni Islam, Shia Islam was extremely intolerant, and under its characteristic concept of the ritual uncleanliness of "non-believer" it enforced disastrous laws against the Jews.

Under these laws, setting Jew apart from Moslem, the Jew's clothes and headgear had to be different, his house and door smaller; he might ride his donkey only side-saddle, while riding a horse was altogether prohibited. A Jew might not leave his house during rain, for the water, having touched a Jew, might then touch a true believer and defile him; a Jew was forbidden to raise his voice in the presence of a Moslem, and he was required to salute every Moslem he met. The life of the Jews was additionally burdened by exorbitant taxes. These persecutions ceased upon conversion to Islam, a course always left open. Additional pressure toward conversion lay in the fact that a Jew who became a Moslem was then the only legal heir to the possessions of his family and relatives.

Under the rule of Nadir Shah (1736-47), a tolerant Sunni ruler, their position was somewhat relieved. He founded a Jewish community in Meshhed, an important town on the Afghan frontier. However, Meshhed was a holy city which annually harbored thousands of Moslem pilgrims. The exist-

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ence of the Jewish community was a constant source of friction, and it suffered continuous persecution by Shia fanatics. Nevertheless, the community survived for one hundred years, until in 1839 the incident occurred which led to its destruction.

ON THE 10th of Muharram, the holiest day of the Shia sect (the day of mourning for Husain, the grandson of Mohammed), a Jewish woman of Meshhed went to a Persian doctor for treatment of her hand. The doctor told her to wash her hand in the blood of a newly killed dog. The woman hired a Persian boy to catch a dog in the street and then kill it in her courtyard. Following a dispute about payment the boy ran off in a rage. A rumor started that the Jews had killed a dog on the holiest of holy days and had even called it Husain to insult the Mohammedans. When this rumor reached the thousands assembled in mourning at the Mosque of the Imam Riza, hundreds of the devout, together with Shaikhs, Mullahs, Sayyids, and other spiritual leaders, rushed to the Jewish quarter. There they plundered, robbed, and burned. Soon the synagogue and the scrolls of the Law stood in flames; many scores of Jews were wounded and some thirty-five were left dead in the streets. The mob would have destroyed the entire Jewish quarter had not a group of priests given their word that the survivors would be converted to Islam by force.

For the remaining Jews the only chance of survival was to recite the Moslem confession of faith. This they did, and on the following day they were officially accepted into Islam. The head of the Shia clergy had the Jews brought to the Mosque where they were again forced to recite the formula "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." By this act the Jews ceased to be non-believers and became Moslems. They were now called "Jadid al-Islam," or neo-Moslem."

With his acceptance of Islam, the convert was immediately freed from all his previous restrictions; he was no longer required to wear a special hat or have his hair dressed in a special way or wear any particular Jewish badge on his clothes, nor was he required to pay the poll-tax (*jizya*). His "uncleanliness" was gone—he was now a Moslem among Moslems.

In return the converted Jews had to break completely with their past. Under the instructions of the priests they had to Islamize their names, a special register being sometimes kept for this purpose in which the names of the newly converted were entered. The scrolls of the Law were either destroyed or taken to the library of the mosque (where to this day some may be found). The synagogue was pulled down and a mosque was erected in its place.

When the muezzin called them to prayer, the Persian marranos came with the rest of the faithful to the mosque. In the early days they were watched closely and were always compelled to recite the "Kalima," the Mohammedan confession of faith. A Jadid could recite the first part without religious or intellectual scruples. But, in the second part, there is the sentence, "Mohammed is the Prophet of God." Here they used secretly to substitute the name Musa (Moses) for that of Mohammed. (There were also certain secret prayers which the Jedidim recited before entering a mosque.)

The mosque now became the legal meeting place of the Jedidim. There, they were under the supervision of the chief priest, the Mujtahid, who exercised the dual role of instructor in Mohammedanism and inquisitor for Islam. He acted as the official head of the Jews as well as their supreme judicial authority. Demanding diligent study of the Koran and the traditional books, he forbade ritual slaughtering, circumcision on the 8th day, ordered mixed marriages between Jedidim and Moslems, and was empowered to grant permission for burial.

IN 1839, then, the Jewish community in Meshhed officially ceased to exist. Yet this forced conversion could not extinguish Judaism in the hearts of the Jedidim; the hope that they might one day return to their own religion remained alive in them.

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At first the Jedidim met secretly only once a week for Jewish prayers on the Sabbath. Having prayed in the mosque early Friday as Moslems, they would secretly assemble the same evening in a subterranean room to hold the *maariv* service. Such meetings were only made possible by the fact that in Islamic countries it is an offense against the law to enter a strange house in which there are women. By having women seated in front of their homes, the Jedidim could congregate without being surprised by outsiders. Even when raids were made on Jedidim houses, as happened frequently through denunciation, the women were able to warn of danger through signaling the arrival of police.

The circle of Jedidim was not content with holding religious meetings. Soon its members met for the study of Torah and, above all, for instruction of the young in Judaism. The important Jewish laws such as circumcision, the dietary laws, etc., were soon again secretly observed. In addition there was a Beth Din where the Jedidim settled their quarrels among themselves without recourse to an Islamic judge.

Secret religious services were held on the Sabbath. Shops had to be kept open, but efforts were made to avoid business transactions. A little boy would sit in a shop and inform customers that the owner was away or that the desired article was out of stock. Since *mezuzot* could not be fastened on the outer doors leading to the courtyard, they were kept in the inner rooms and explained to visitors as a kind of talisman or protection from the evil eye. Circumcision was practiced without difficulty, because the Moslems too have this rite, although it is carried out not on the 8th day but later in life. On Pesach, matzot was eaten, but bread was bought on the market to avoid suspicion.

In earlier days the Islamic authorities insisted on mixed marriages as proof of allegiance to Islam. Cases are recorded where even high ranking religious officials, by virtue of their authority, demanded Jewish maidens of the Jedidim in marriage. The refusal of their parents to agree to such unions nearly brought new catastrophe on the Jedidim community. But the Jedidim took advantage of the general Persian custom of contracting early marriages. At the age of five or six, children of Jedidim families were already promised in marriage by their parents as future husbands or wives, and every approach by a Mohammedan suitor could be met with "already promised."

UNTIL recently, it was believed that Jewish life in Meshhed had disappeared. Now documents have been found which prove that marrano Jews actually exist today, to the number of some 3,000.

Recently found ketubot, or marriage contracts, clearly illustrate the duality of the religious life of the Jedidim. The solemnization of a Jewish marriage naturally took place in secret before a Beth Din, of whose existence the Islamic clergy was unaware. But, officially, the Jedidim had to celebrate their marriage according to Islamic law, in which a contract must be entered into by the bridegroom on the one hand and a representative of the bride on the other before a recognized Islamic authority, and signed in the presence of at least two witnesses. So, after having secretly written their Jewish ketubah, the Jedidim officially drew up their Islamic marriage contract as well. The latter contained verses from the Koran, general terms of blessing, the names of the parties, the amount of the dowry, and, at the end or on the sides, the signatures of the witnesses and the date of the contract. In the case of a Jadid marriage contract the words "Jadid al-Islam" were added after the names of the bride and bridegroom. For instance, after the name of the bridegroom, Ali Ibn Husain, the word "Jadid" or "from the community of Jadid" would appear. It is interesting to note that the former Jews are now called Husain, Mohammed, Ali, Ismail, Faraj, etc.

Another highly interesting feature of these marrano ketubot are the signatures of the witnesses. They are not, as one might expect, written in the usual Persian script, but in Hebrew characters. This remarkable fact shows the tenacity with which the Persian

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marranos retained their old alphabet and their daring in using it even in an official document before the Islamic court.

Usually a change of faith has meant a change of script: upon their conversion to Christianity the Spanish marranos adopted Latin characters in their script. To this day, however, the ledgers of the Persian marranos are made out in Hebrew script and their correspondence, which, like their speech, is in Persian, is written in the Hebrew alphabet. This Hebrew writing also served them as a kind of code in a secret marrano Persian dialect of their own, called "Lo Torai," in which some Hebrew words are still in use. Often these Hebrew signatures are followed by the designation "Hajji" or "Kerbelai," implying that the bearer has made a pilgrimage to Mecca or to Kerbelah, a holy city in Mesopotamia.

These signatures in the ketubot provide the first documentary evidence that Jewish pilgrims visited the holy places of the Islamic world. Mecca pilgrims enjoy a very special esteem in the eyes of the Moslems and when the neo-Moslems began to figure in the ranks of the "Hajjis," their social status was greatly improved. So much so, that they began to occupy high clerical positions in the administration of the holy mosque in Meshhed itself, such as lighter of the lamps, door-keepers of the mosque, and keepers of the keys of holy burial places. Their names are remembered to this day and one Jadid is known who even held the office of muezzin, i.e., a caller to prayers.

THE catastrophe of 1839 also initiated a Jewish migration which radically affected the pattern of Jewish distribution in Central Asia. A large stream of fugitives moved from Meshhed both to the East and to the West, in search of a new home free from the tyranny of the Shia sect. This migration and emigration of marranos extended first of all to the border lands such as Afghanistan, Turkestan, and Bokhara, where Jewish communities had existed for many years. It led also to new settlements along the old caravan route from Meshhed to the East as far as Samarkand and Merv, and to the South as far as Bombay and Calcutta.

Of the history and present position of Afghanistan Jewry, their number, occupations, etc., we know very little. All we can definitely state is that they are descendants of the Jedidim who fled from Meshhed and found their first haven of refuge mainly in Herat, and by the end of the last century numbered 300 Jewish families.

The stream of refugees also reached Russian Turkestan and the present Jewish population of that province is made up, in the main, of their descendants. These refugees settled all along the stretch of country between Meshhed and Merv in Turkestan, one of the oldest and most famous of the caravan routes. In the town of Askabad at the beginning of this century the settlement of Jedidim comprised more than fifty families, who suffered much from the continuous Russian-Turcoman rivalry. The favorable position of the town, at a junction on the Trans-Caspian Railway, led to a rapid improvement of the economic conditions of the Jewish community, which continued to attract other Jedidim from Meshhed. However, the Russian press loudly denounced the continued influx of refugees, and the Russian government is even said to have issued an expulsion order against the Jedidim which was cancelled only through the intervention of friendly Turcoman tribes.*

* The phenomenon of Jewish marranos in Central Asia provided problems for many travelers and archaeologists. We find the Jedidim in Turkestan referred to as "so-called Jews" who are often "neither Yehudim nor Beni Israel. They call themselves simply Mussai, followers of Moses." These "Mussai" are none other than the former marranos of Meshhed. The expression "Mussai" in the mouth of the Jews of Merv arose because the Jedidim of Meshhed preferred to keep their coming from that district a secret. Instead of Meshhed they preferred to use the name "Mussai," which has nearly the same sound and in Hebrew writing nearly the identical characters. Proof of this can be found in a *Piut* written in the year 1905 by Salomon ben Mashiah and published in the Prayer Book for Persian marranos. Even in that Prayer Book this Jew from Meshhed did not abandon the customary caution and called his poem, which gives a description of the sufferings of the Jews of Meshhed, "A Poem of the Marranos of Mosche."

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The marranos' colonies extend as far as Samarkand, across Bokhara, where before the Great War hundreds of Jedidim were settled. Southeast of Meshhed, along the caravan route of Dozdap-Karachi-Bombay, there also arose scattered settlements of Jedidim which developed a commercial importance. Some of the Jedidim settled in Bombay itself.

The stream of migration spread westward as well. Settlements of this marrano migration, small camps as it were, are encountered on the way from Meshhed to Teheran and further west. Many Jedidim joined previously existing Jewish communities in the interior of Persia which endure to this day. Since, according to Islamic Law, Moslems who renounce Islam are liable to the death penalty, the Jews from Meshhed were careful to call themselves Mussai or Sodomi, so that the masses might not suspect their true origin.

THE largest community of Jedidim to the west of Meshhed is in Jerusalem. Not founded immediately after the catastrophe of 1839, but only in the nineties of the last century, the causes which led to its foundation give us an insight into the inner life and mentality of the Jedidim.

Mention has already been made of the fact that the Jedidim who remained in Meshhed had been repeatedly urged by the leaders of Islam to undertake, like every true Moslem, the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina in order to visit the tomb of the prophet Mohammed and the "Kaaba." Preachers in the Jadid mosque used every opportunity to impress this duty upon every Moslem, and not a few Jedidim undertook the pilgrimage to escape inquisitorial interference with their mode of life and to prevent the entire marrano community from being exposed to the suspicions of the Islamic Inquisition.

These marrano pilgrims were in a position to do much good for their community upon their return because of their prestige as "Hajji." Many of the Jewish pilgrims to Mecca, however, used the pilgrimage only to travel to Jerusalem, where they were finally able to pour out their hearts in their own language at the Wailing Wall, and to throw off the mask of their secret life.

These escaped Mecca pilgrims form the nucleus of the Jadid colony in Jerusalem. To this day the religious life of the Jadid community in that city is concentrated in two synagogues which were founded by two "Hajjis" on their return from Mecca: the synagogue of Hajji Yeheskel (or Ishmael) and that of Hajji Adoniyahu.

The Jedidim who came to Jerusalem from Meshhed entered Palestine as Moslems and were looked upon as Mohammedan immigrants, as the names—Hajji Mohammed, Hajji Nasrullah and even Ali, Husain, etc. —on their passports implied. After they underwent the various formalities for a permanent residence in Palestine, many of the Jedidim sought to change their names and sent in applications for Palestinian nationality. Requests for changes of names, such as Husain into Chaim, Abdallah into Aaron, Ali into Ephraim, or Mohammed into Moses, naturally surprised government officials and provoked far-fetched speculation.

WITHIN the last few decades the Jadid colony in Jerusalem has been growing steadily. This is due both to their longing for escape from the burden of leading a double life, and the changed conditions in Eretz Israel. The message of the Balfour Declaration, the news of a renaissance of the Jewish nation, aroused in them a fervent hope for a speedy redemption from their ambivalent existence.

It is perhaps not well known that almost simultaneously with the "Hovevei Zion" in Russia, a similar movement was started in the Orient, and that towards the end of the last century there began a considerable immigration of Bokharian, Persian, Turkestan, and other Oriental Jews into Palestine. When the history of the Hibat Zion movement of Oriental Jewry comes to be written, it will be seen what an important part "Zion" and "Eretz Israel" has always played in the thoughts and feelings of Persian Jewry.

Long before Ahad Ha'am, Jerusalem was

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for Oriental and especially for Persian Jewry a "cultural center" in the truest sense of the word. Nothing demonstrates this better than the fact that a Jewish-Persian press originated in Jerusalem to satisfy not only the requirements of the few Persian Jews resident there at the time, but to meet the needs, both literary and liturgical, of the Jews in Central Asia. Among the products of the Hebrew-Persian printing press sent from Jerusalem to Middle Asia, there is, significantly enough, a Jewish-Persian translation of Abraham Maju's novel *Ahavat Zion* which even ran into a second edition.

In this Jewish-Persian printing activity, Jedidim also took part, and in 1908 a Persian Prayer Book was published, edited by Mulla Murat, who had secretly occupied the position of Rabbi in Meshhed. Another publication by a Jadid is typical of its sentiments. It is a booklet called *Sefer Millim Shisha,* a small dictionary in six languages. Its object is to give pilgrims from Central Asia to Palestine linguistic material to enable them to become acquainted with Hebrew, while giving them knowledge of the languages of the people in the neighboring countries. It states its purpose in the preface: "In order to teach pilgrims to the Holy Land to speak all languages met with on their way . . . without any trouble or difficulty."

Ironically enough, of all Persian Jews the marranos of Meshhed have become and remain the richest. Many are prosperous merchants dealing in carpets, skins, clothes, antiques, spices, drugs, etc. This commercial prosperity of the Jedidim, which distinguishes them from nearly all other communities in Persia, is closely connected with their life as marranos. Being officially Moslems, they were able to develop their capabilities freely, and were exempt from all the restrictions on Jews in other parts of Persia. Further, as merchants, their paths led them across the border of Persia and along the most important caravan routes, where they always met the newly founded colonies of fugitive Jedidim—in Central Asia, Afghanistan, Bokhara, and Turkestan. These colonies of Jedidim along the great highways of trade were the main support for the commercial activity of the marranos of Meshhed. They at once built up trade relations with each other which would have taken a Mohammedan or Armenian—the strongest competitors of the Jews—a long time to establish.

This flourishing financial position of the marranos is of benefit to Jews outside Meshhed as well. Here is an example: The late Shah of Persia happened to be on a tour of inspection some years ago. Preparations for his reception went on for weeks in the bigger towns; people put out their flags, the streets were cleaned and decorated, the officials were trembling, and the school children got new uniforms for the great occasion. The Jewish community in Yezd, however, could not afford such expense, and it was then that the Jedidim of Meshhed stepped in and sent money to the Jewish school children that they too might have new clothes for the reception of the Shah.

Recent developments have influenced the Meshhed community both for good and evil. The reforms of the late Shah Riza Pehlevi deprived the clergy of much of their temporal power and under the Russian occupation of Persia the Jedidim were able to act more overtly as Jews. As a consequence of this, the wave of anti-Jewish feeling that is sweeping the Middle East—resulting from the Palestine situation—has adversely affected the Jedidim, as Jews. The last chapter in the strange history of the Persian marranos has yet to be written.

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THE POETRY OF ISAAC ROSENBERG

"Sudden the Lightning Flashed Upon a Figure. . . ."

MARIUS BEWLEY

WHEN Isaac Rosenberg was buried in an unmarked grave in France in 1918, he left behind only a slender sheaf of poetry that can be regarded as really important. Despite his several inconspicuous appearances in print, he must have seemed as nearly anonymous as most of the hundreds of thousands who were killed that year. And in spite of his talent, and Gordon Bottomley's edition of his poems, brought out in 1922, the years that followed his death have done little to rectify that churlish neglect which had been their chief gift to him while alive.*

There is, certainly, a confusing unevenness in the collected volume† as a whole, an occasional fragmentary quality that is superficially disengaging—at least to the easily discouraged. His best efforts are contained in a handful of *Trench Poems* which must be set off against a considerably larger number of poems written at different stages in his creative immaturity. This period of artistic uncertainty and more or less conventional poetics was more than usually protracted in Rosenberg's case; and that for a number of reasons, most of which can be traced to the discouragements of poverty.

In view of all this, it is sad, but not surprising, that Rosenberg has been left to languish among the Georgians. He is, of course, entitled to that classification by virtue of his inclusion, by a single poem, in Edward Marsh's 1916-17 Georgian anthology. His most influential friends had been Georgians; his small correspondence includes letters to Gordon Bottomley, Edward Marsh, Lascelles Abercrombie, and R. C. Trevelyan—all of them names that made Georgian literary history, and have been long out of fashion. But Rosenberg developed into something else, and left the suburbanized garden plots of Georgian poetry far behind him.

BEFORE the war Rosenberg had served a hard apprenticeship in poverty; his life was short and sad, and looking back over it, an early sentence of his acquires a tragic significance: "What purpose was there in such wasted striving—and supposing success did come would it be sufficient recompense for the wasted life and youth, the starved years. . . ?"

Isaac Rosenberg was born in Bristol, England, on November 25, 1890. His father, Barnett Rosenberg, had come from Lithuania; his mother, Chasa Davidoff, had been born in Latvia. He had seven brothers and

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IN THE three decades since he was killed in action in France at the age of twenty-eight, Isaac Rosenberg, one of the British "war poets" of World War I, has been increasingly recognized as one of the most authentic talents in the literary generation foreshadowing the development of modern poetry. MARIUS BEWLEY here offers perhaps the fullest analysis to date of Rosenberg's work against the background of his time. Mr. Bewley, at present working toward a doctorate at Columbia University, was born in Missouri in 1917, and has studied at St. Louis University and Cambridge University. He has written literary criticism for *Scrutiny*, *View*, and other periodicals. Two poems by Isaac Rosenberg have been published in COMMENTARY during the past year: "Spring 1916" in the January 1948 issue, and "Break of Day in the Trenches" in the May issue.

* D. W. Harding's essay, "The Poetry of Isaac Rosenberg," *Scrutiny*, March 1935, is a distinguished exception to this melancholy generalization, as is T. S. Eliot's mention of Isaac Rosenberg, in a Poetry Bookshop Chapbook, as a poet whose neglect was owing to the bad state of contemporary criticism.

†*The Complete Works of Isaac Rosenberg*, edited by Gordon Bottomley and D. W. Harding, London; Chatto and Windus, 1937.

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sisters, and although his luck was generally bad, he was fortunate in preserving warm and sympathetic relationships with all his family until his death. His parents spoke Yiddish, and Rosenberg was sent to Hebrew school in his early childhood. The atmosphere of his home influenced him so strongly that by the time he was ten he was writing poetry on Jewish religious history.

His eldest sister, who was the first to recognize his talent, sought advice about her little brother from the local librarian, but the latter was only able to recommend that the child read "The Charge of the Light Brigade" often. Mr. Beth Zion Lask, in an article on Rosenberg which appeared in *Reflex* some years ago, maintains that the Rosenberg family was "poor in a Jewish way," which is something "totally different from non-Jewish poverty." Praise of poverty in any form is always unconvincing; and there is nothing in the tone of Rosenberg's early letters, where he refers to his own poverty as a "fiendish mangling machine," that leads one to suppose he reacted to it any differently from any other sensitive, highly talented young man struggling for an education.

His family had moved to London when he was seven years old, settling near Whitechapel. He attended an elementary school, where he began to show a particular interest in drawing; but when he was fourteen it became necessary for him to leave school and go to work. He worked for a firm of art engravers in Fleet Street as an apprentice, and although he hated the work he managed to go to night classes at the art school of Birbeck College. In view of the little time he had at his own disposal, he read a great deal, and always with enthusiasm; but he never quite lost a sense of educational deficiency. "You mustn't forget," he wrote years later, "the circumstances I have been brought up in, the little education I have had. Nobody ever told me what to read, or ever put poetry in my way."

In 1911 he rashly gave up his job, but after a few exhilarating weeks of freedom lapsed into nervous melancholy. Things seemed to brighten a little when three Jewish ladies gave him money to attend the Slade School of Art from October 1911 until March 1914. At the Slade he had a successful student's career, won prizes, competed for the Prix de Rome, and exhibited some paintings at the Whitechapel Gallery. From available descriptions of Rosenberg's paintings one surmises they were strongly romantic, even pre-Raphaelite. But turning to the several reproductions of portraits and drawings in *The Complete Works,* one is surprised by their freshness and vigor, and one begins to have a faith in his capacity for painting, a faith that is strengthened by reading a rather sketchy, formless lecture called simply "Art," which he delivered while in Cape Town, and which was later published in a periodical gruesomely named *South African Women in Council.* The lecture contains many felicities of phrase and insight which were far ahead of English art criticism of the day.

But actually these years of study at the Slade were not happy ones. Occasionally one glimpses humiliations imposed on him by at least one of his patronesses. "I am very sorry I have disappointed you," Rosenberg writes to her. "If you tell me what was expected of me I shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing by how much I have erred. You were disappointed by my picture for its unfinished state—I have no wish to defend myself—or I might ask you what you mean by finish. . . . I cannot conceive who gave you the idea that I had such big notions of myself, are you sure the people you enquired of know me, and meant me. . . . I am not very inquisitive naturally, but I think it concerns me to know what you mean by poses and mannerisms—and whose advice do I not take who are in a position to give—and what more healthy style of work do you wish me to adopt?"

It is grim to learn from another letter that Rosenberg was dependent on this patroness at the time even for money to have his shoes repaired.

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After three years of this kind of benevolence his health gave way. It was thought that he had tuberculosis, and that he would be benefited by a trip to Cape Town, where one of his married sisters was living. One hears of difficulty in scraping together the twelve pounds passage money; and then his letters give a few pictures of him after his arrival: meeting Olive Schreiner, who liked him and admired some drawings of Kaffirs he made; visiting a wealthy family, and writing home with the enthusiasm of a really poor young man, about "wonderful breakfasts—the unimaginable lunches—delicious teas, and colossal dinners." But South Africa seemed worse than tuberculosis, and he eagerly returned to England the following year, apparently improved in health. At home, he published at his own expense a pamphlet of sixteen short poems called *Youth*. These form a marked advance over the somewhat Keatsian pamphlet, *Night and Day*, which he had published in the same manner in 1912. But if Rosenberg's real genius is faintly heralded in *Youth*—perhaps at one or two points more than faintly—the moment of his poetic self-discovery was by no means at hand.

Meanwhile the 1914 war came along. Whether sick or well, Rosenberg measured up to the army's physical requirements; and so, greatly discouraged, he anticipated the inevitable and enlisted, although he hated the whole war machine. "Believe me," he wrote, "the army is the most detestable invention on earth, and nobody but a private knows what it is to be a slave." His army letters are characteristically restrained, but they reveal the real horror of army life—the over-sized shoes and ulcerated feet, the insolent stupidity of officers, the damp beds and the head-colds, the filthy clothes, the endless obscenity—better than any war letters that spring to mind immediately; and yet they are the briefest scrawls, mere snippets of his experience. It is astonishing to consider that it was under these conditions that he began and carried on his most significant period of productivity.

In 1916, after a term of training in England, he was sent to France in the King's Own Royal Lancasters. Before going, he managed to have his one-act play *Moses* printed privately, together with seven short poems, including the savage poem "God." This last poem is best understood in the light of Rosenberg's whole development, but inasmuch as some critics have complained about its theological improprieties, it had better be said at this point that the God of the poem is a very special, if not very rare one, evoked by the middle classes out of their "imaginative indolence" and preached by the recruiting clergy of Rosenberg's day. It is a sociological, not a theological god.

Trench Poems were composed between the publication of *Moses* and Rosenberg's death on April 1, 1918, when his twenty-eighth birthday was still half a year away.

Rosenberg belongs to that small group of poets who had sensed how essentially different the war that began in 1914 was from all others. Their greater awareness was not merely rational but intuitive, and their poetry is an attempt to explore and analyze the monstrous experience. In their hands war poetry came to mean something different from what it had commonly meant before. For them war no longer comprised a fragment of experience, but its totality. They no longer tried to evaluate it in the perspective of peacetime assumptions, to accept the apology of official slogans, or absorb the war's effect on the individual by dreaming of an imminent return to the status quo. They understood that, for them at any rate, the tyranny was absolute.

The rift between the experiences of war and the experiences of civilization had widened so much by the 20th century that it was nearly impassable, with the experiences of war becoming dominant for a large and ever increasing portion of the world's population. If war poetry were to have any claims as valid artistic expression, it could no longer exist as a specialized department of verse. It could no longer be

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merely a rousing hunting song, nor was the ode of pure patriotism any longer very pure.

Most of the poets who won recognition during World War I developed a protective subjectivity like Alan Seeger, or, like that truly typical Georgian, Rupert Brooke, continued to experience the war in the cracked molds of old attitudes, and under the colors of a faded glamor. When mentioning the few names that one can positively bring forward, names like Edward Thomas, Wilfred Owen, and Isaac Rosenberg, one must remember that their profound perception of the nature of the crisis represented, necessarily, only a fragmentary understanding, and that these fragments, which each brilliantly discovered for himself, were more personal than social. And so it is difficult to generalize, even about a group of three. But they did begin and end with this in common (and this they shared with a few others, such as Siegfried Sassoon): equally, they hated the sham and hypocrisy of the war, and they saw through it with a surprisingly radical vision.

Charles Sorley, another young poet who was killed early in the war, spoke for them all when he wrote: "England—I am sick of the sound of the word. In training to fight for England, I am training to fight for that deliberate hypocrisy, that terrible middle-class sloth of outlook and appalling 'imaginative indolence' that has marked us from generation to generation."

And yet these young men voluntarily went to war, and almost all were killed. This apparent contradiction ("Nothing can justify war," Rosenberg wrote at the time he appeared to submit most to its claims) sprang from no wavering resolution, but from a perception that naturally embraced expiatory suffering as the only way out. This perception may often have been greater than their poetry—the practical difficulties of writing at all were only short of insuperable—but ultimately it was the life of it. In time the poetry of Rosenberg (Edward Thomas is a different case altogether: in his own way he is second to no one) would almost certainly have assumed proportions commensurate with the full reality it was trying to express. But I do not wish to make the mistake of dwelling on Rosenberg's "promise"; his achievement is evident enough.

For every person who has read a poem of Rosenberg's, a few hundred must have read something of Wilfred Owen's. And yet Rosenberg is the greater poet. Both men were rather like unguilty angels who had fallen with the rout into pandemonium, and their verse is an attempt to survey creatively their new midnight universe. Owen may have carried a little more of the old heaven with him, but Rosenberg understood better the brutual anonymity of the war, and the true dimension of the tragedy. Owen never quite became more than a good Georgian, and while it would be rash to speculate about the course of his literary career had he lived, his work has none of that rampant, impatient eagerness to reach beyond itself which is so frequently startling in the other poet's work. There was something Wordsworthian about the Georgians, but it was a Wordsworth stripped of stature; and it is stature that one never quite discovers in Owen's own poems. His hatred of war is too exclusively a hatred of its physical effects on the lives of the young Englishmen under his command.

One cannot help feeling that Owen is caught and held back by the sight of all the suffering—which, after all, is only one anguished corner of the whole intolerable picture. Owen seems little concerned with any reality that is not to be penetrated by pity alone. He seems to converge his perspective lines towards the hospital cot rather than to unfold them from that terminus of pity. The vision he offers is poignant but incomplete, and too regretful to be great. It is a picture made up of many moving accidents—so many that the form of the tragedy is sometimes obscured.

Rosenberg's poetry does not stop short of the pity and tenderness in Owen's, but passes beyond it into something new. He is aware that the suffering of war is too

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great to be comforted, and he cannot mistake pity for succor; in his poetry, suffering achieves something like classical composure. Details are lost in grandeur of form, and his victims have a heroic moral strength, a stoicism which invites the mind not to the frustrating pity of helplessness, but to something like the re-creative pity of the ancient stage.

As a sample of this attitude one may look at a short passage from "Dead Man's Dump," one of the greatest poems of World War I. It is directly, even starkly concerned with suffering, and yet its terrible picture of agony never hinders the poise, the freedom of inquiry that is maintained throughout. In this poem, so impersonal and detached in comparison with much of Owen's poetry, there is a hard, almost shocking concreteness and immediacy of imagery that makes Owen seem vague and general by contrast:

A man's brains splattered on
A stretcher-bearer's face;
His shook shoulders slipped their load,
But when they bent to look again
The drowning soul was sunk too
deep for human tenderness.
They left the dead with the older dead,
Stretched at the cross roads.

Burnt black with strange decay
Their sinister faces lie,
The lid over each eye,
The grass and coloured clay
More motion have than they
Joined to the great sunk silences.

One is not so much aware of the single, the private death here, as one is aware of the representative and universal quality in the death which is described. All "the older dead" and all who will die seem to participate symbolically in this one soldier's death. The ineffectual resentment we might otherwise feel is guarded against by very carefully handled suggestions of inevitability, and, even as we watch, the action reaches and seems to continue beyond that point where human tenderness can follow, down into an antique, stoic underworld of "great sunk silences." This soldier is less a private person than a point at which the fate of men in war becomes for a moment visible.

And it is significant that no facile, gratuitous commentary on that fate is offered in the whole eighty-six lines of "Dead Man's Dump." The poem's strength lies in the composure it maintains when faced by human pain, in its refusal to indulge an easy grief or extend a gala invitation to tears. It shows a sure control of words moving through dangerous emotions at disciplined speeds and leading the reader, by their very restraint and poise, into a fuller understanding of human dignity.

But Rosenberg did not pass from writing romantic poetry in civilian life to verse of this stature in a single day. One may arrive at a better understanding of the peculiar impersonality of *Trench Poems* if one looks first at the play *Moses*. Its strength is not the strength of the later poems, but it is a necessary step towards them and in some respects nothing Rosenberg wrote later exceeds it in interest.

Rosenberg wanted to find some intelligible correlation between the private agony and the tremendous destructive energy released in modern war, some way of imparting full weight to the unknown lives being snuffed out in pain and hence some way of guaranteeing his own identity against destruction. He sought, therefore, to create in Moses the idea of a human consciousness and will great and energetic enough to oppose war successfully. This conception of energy and power became, in one way and another, an integral part of Rosenberg's imagination. It not only provided him with occasional themes and symbols: more important, it helped to strengthen the texture of his writing.

But such conceptions, if they mean anything in art, can be neither arbitrarily devised nor assumed. Rosenberg's concept of power has obvious affiliations with his Jewish background, and its genesis goes back

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far into his own life—back into those dreary years of poverty and sickness. One can trace its development in several disguises in his earlier work and letters. But it is important to insist that Rosenberg never attempted to exploit the compensatory comforts of art, and he never developed his notion of power, such as it was, as an anodyne for the pains of experience.

Indeed, one sees how deliberately he exposed himself to the full horror of the war experience from a letter he wrote to Edward Marsh in 1916: "I am determined that this war, with all its powers for devastation, shall not master my poeting. . . . I will not leave a corner of my consciousness covered, but saturate myself with the strange and extraordinary new conditions of this life, and it will all refine itself into poetry later on." There were to be no shadowy places in his brain for retreat, no secret corners for weeping. Thus it was that the first impact of the war on Rosenberg conferred a universal significance on what had been merely private struggle before, and gave new scope and depth to his writing.

Moses was the first fruit of this enlarged frame of mind. Yet as things stand, the conception with which Rosenberg struggles in the play remains a little inchoate. Moses emerges as a figure of great force, but lacks a proportionate moral definition. Had Rosenberg lived longer, his conception of power would undoubtedly have gained in form as he successively invested it in other, and possibly more tractable, characters of Jewish history. Rosenberg wished to write a play about Judas Maccabaeus. He felt that in Maccabaeus he might be able to subdue the aggressiveness with which he had endowed his first hero, and add the note of magnanimity to power. But the chance never came.

For all its violence of language, the action of *Moses* is static. This is not necessarily a defect, for it is undeniably a play to be read. It is inconceivable on the stage. The play is in two scenes, and occurs at that point in Moses' career when he has not yet disclaimed Pharaoh but is about to do so. Moses is seen throughout as more god than man—a source of energy to all who come in contact with him. A young Hebrew describes him in hyperbolic terms:

He spoke! Since yesterday
Am I not larger grown?
I've seen men hugely shapen in soul
Of such unhuman shaggy male turbulence
They tower in foam miles from our neck-strained sight.
And to their shop only heroes come.
But all were cripples to this speed
Constrained to the stables of flesh.
I say there is a famine in ripe harvest
When hungry giants come as guests.
Come knead the hills and ocean into food.
There is none for him.

In the beginning Moses is not aware of his own potential power. He is still a victim of Egyptian sensuality and indolence. The consciousness of what he can be awakens slowly in him, but when it comes it is a tremendous spiritual revelation:

I am rough now, and new, and will have no tailor.
Startlingly,
As a mountain-side
Wakes aware of its other side
When from a cave a leopard comes,
On its heels the same red sand,
Springing with acquainted air,
Sprang an intelligence
Coloured as a whim of mine,
Showed to my dull outer eyes
The living eyes underneath.
Did I not shrivel up and take the place of air,
Secret as those eyes were,
And those strong eyes call up a giant frame?
And I am that now.

Perhaps the most humanly arresting action in the play occurs in Moses' rejection of his Egyptian mistress, Koelue. She is the daughter of Abinoah, a brutal overseer of the Hebrew slaves, whom Moses kills as the curtain falls on the last scene. It may be worth noting that this family relation-

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ship between Moses' erotic past and the Egyptian dynastic tyranny as represented in the overseer suggests the kind of self-purgation Rosenberg brought to his own spiritual conquest of the tyranny of middle-class England. Yet as Moses describes his intention it does not sound as much like a purgative measure as a brutal exchange, swapping "red lips of flesh" for "the huge kiss of power." "I will ride the dizzy beast of the world," Moses cries, "My road—my way."

But Rosenberg's conception of power begins to reach towards its real complexity only in the long final speech of *Moses*, in which Moses reveals that he will exert his power on the Hebrews to

. . . grandly fashion these rude elements
Into some newer nature, a consciousness
Like naked light seizing the all-eyed soul,
Oppressing with its gorgeous tyranny
Until they take it thus—or die.

Moses is Rosenberg's largest attempt to educe creatively the idea of a new kind of consciousness which would characteristically express itself in (the words are his) "virility" and "original action." This conception is available to the reader through a prose paraphrase of the play. But ideas as such are only tolerated intruders in a really good poem. It is far more important that the effects of this idea are felt in many passages as the strength of the verse itself.

However much the action flags, Rosenberg's verse has a dramatic quality locally that calls for special elucidation. Here is a short speech from the first scene:

Moses: *Fine! Fine!*
See in my brain
What madmen have rushed through,
And like a tornado
Torn up the tight roots
Of some dead universe.
The old clay is broken
For a power to soak in and knit
It all into tougher tissues
To hold life,
Pricking my nerves till the brain might crack
It boils to my finger tips,
Till my hands ache to grip
The hammer—the lone hammer
That breaks lives into a road
Through which my genius drives.

This passage contains the whole idea of the play in germ: an awakening sense of power, and the determination to see it through. It is characteristic of this play that each speech has a tendency to become a microcosm reflecting the central conception in its full breadth and vigor. In this passage one remarks the unusual strength of the verbs, which are not only violent but operate with kinesthetic effect: tight roots are torn up by a tornado, the hands ache to grip the hammer, nerves are pricked, the brain threatens to crack, and so on—figures full of tensions and resistances. Now as Moses symbolizes the desire for (in Rosenberg's own phrase) "original action," it is impressive that this desire should so tangibly incarnate itself here in a series of kinesthetic verb operations. These power images actually seem to release an energy within the verse which stands in apposition to the formally articulate desire. Furthermore, one notes that while the response one brings to the imagistic series is cumulative in effect, there is a rising curve of intensity, as towards a dramatic catastrophe. The first two images—the madmen and the tornado—clear the stage (carefully localized to the arena of the brain) for the influx of the new vision of power. The image of the broken clay is transitional—a kind of fertility image which leaves an interval out for growth—and leads into the fully developed power image, the hammer which breaks lives into a road, and serves as climax to this particular sequence. Then, the ultimate image of regality closes the sequence—genius out-Pharaohing Pharaoh in a procession down a royal highway.

It is part of Rosenberg's high status as a poet that the power concept which he

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developed in *Moses* did not constitute a settlement that fostered the delusion of permanence, an investment whose dividends might be drawn on at leisure. He believed in energy as a bowstring might: taut, he was a singing resistant thing; but relaxed, he was abject and useless. Nevertheless, there was always the temptation to accept an easier solution, a reconciliation with the past, with what Charles Sorley had called "imaginative indolence," rather than to preserve the perpetual tension demanded by the exacting kind of consciousness Rosenberg sought. Shortly before he died he described the temptation explicitly in a fragment of a play called *The Amulet*:

In all our textures are loosed
Pulses straining against strictness
Because an easy issue lies therefrom.

His poem, "Returning We Hear the Larks," represents his tireless resistance against what appear to him to be temptations to capitulate. It is his best known poem, and Mr. Beth Zion Lask correctly says, "Had he written nothing else, this one poem could have stood to serve his fame." Since it is quite short it may be quoted in full:

Sombre the night is,
And though we have our lives, we know
What sinister threat lurks there.

Dragging these anguished limbs, we only know
This poison-blasted track opens on our camp—
On a little safe sleep.

But hark joy—joy—strange joy.
Lo! heights of night ringing with unseen larks.
Music showering on our upturned list'ning faces.

Death could drop from the dark
As easily as song—
But song only dropped,
Like a blind man's dreams on the sand
By dangerous tides,
Like a girl's dark hair, for she dreams no ruin lies there,
Or her kisses where a serpent hides.

The very first word of the poem is like a gong whose portentous reverberations carry through to the seventh line, at which point, with the interjection, the gloom is suddenly shattered. The opening situation is a stark statement of human insecurity, and though it is described in terms of a particular situation, the "poison-blasted track" that "opens on a little safe sleep" somehow makes one think of Dante's dark wood where the straight way was lost. The sudden burst of song which, after an initial moment of terror, the soldiers endure with joy, is, within the compass of the poem, something in the nature of a mystical experience. The line which carries the main burden of that experience, "Joy—joy—strange joy," curiously resembles one of the ejaculatory lines in a secret memorandum of Pascal's commemorating an intense spiritual experience: under the heading FIRE he had written "Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy." In attempting to needle a word into what was, for Pascal, ultimately incommunicable, and what to Rosenberg momentarily seemed so, both men reduced its cross-section of associational layers to an absolute minimum, and sharpened its denotative point. The two following lines in Rosenberg's poem confirm the mystical nature of the experience. There is the religion intonation of the interjection, "Lo!," the ecstatic, evocative shrillness of "heights of night," the solemn mystery of the "unseen larks." Finally, in the following line, there are the beneficent suggestions of music, rain, and prayer.

Now from the viewpoint of their poetic integrity these lines present the experience as a valid one, certainly nothing to mistrust or regret. Nevertheless, a moment after the larks cease singing, a moment after the experience has passed, Rosenberg does question its validity in the last seven lines, which he marshals against the first part of the

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poem. Rosenberg seems almost to have preferred death, which might have dropped from the heavens, to the song that did, and he accuses it, in two closing similes, of concealed treacheries.

He had once written before the war: "It is all *experience*; but good God! It is *all* experience, and nothing else." During the war he had finally achieved a kind of organization of that experience, and gained a measure of control over it by informing his consciousness with a new energy and confidence. Once the immediate exultation of the larks' song had passed, everything the music meant to Rosenberg—and perhaps it had better be left vague—represented a temptation from the past to slacken his hold, to subside into "that terrible middle-class sloth of outlook and appalling 'imaginative indolence.'" At the beginning of the war, confronted with its first sights of injustice, he had asked in his poem, "God," "Who rests in God's mean flattery now?" Certainly he did not wish to be guilty of doing so himself.

And yet one cannot help noting that the final seven lines of the poem do not carry the conviction poetically that the first part does. They lack the spontaneous immediacy of the opening. There is a profound poignancy about "The Larks" which arises from an ambiguity of which Rosenberg himself was not yet wholly aware. Do the siren larks sing from a past which Rosenberg is courageous enough to resist, inviting him to a spiritual surrender? Or are they ministers of a grace which still seems beyond the reach of his powers, which so far he has neither the courage nor the means of attaining? Probably both answers are partly true. At any rate, Rosenberg's poised indecision in this poem constitutes a brilliant examination of the bases of the spiritual security he was endeavoring to construct for himself.

ALTHOUGH one can occasionally trace an ironic inflection in *Moses*, irony was not a favorite instrument of Rosenberg's genius. His mind lacked the cynicism necessary for a mocking mode of expression. But one of his *Trench Poems*, "Break of Day in the Trenches," owes its success to the presence of something at its center approximating irony. Even here, however, the irony is without sarcasm, and almost without bitterness. There is a pervading stillness in the poem, an accomplished nervelessness, deliberately poised between spiritual discouragement and resignation. In some ways this is the saddest and most human of all his poems. It contains two points of consciousness: the poet who speaks, and who no longer seems to have any intense reaction to what he undergoes, and a rat who is credited with a personal and critical outlook:

Droll rat, they would shoot you if they knew
Your cosmopolitan sympathies.
Now you have touched this English hand
You will do the same to a German—

The positions of men and rats have been quietly exchanged, and with devastating effect. It is the rat who has become civilized (and for that reason only is "droll"). And it is the rat who has become the judge of men who appeal to him for knowledge of themselves:

What do you see in our eyes
At the shrieking iron and flame
Hurled through still heavens?

Some particular mention should also be made of the poem "Louse Hunting." In twenty-five short lines it describes a delirious episode in a barracks at night. Naked soldiers, driven to frenzy by the biting of the lice, leap into a wild vermin-hunting dance by candlelight. Rosenberg invests the scene with Gothic depth, evoking the terror and fascination of a Walpurgisnacht. The first sentence is like a sculptured narration of lost souls from a church porch:

Nudes—stark and glistening,
Yelling in lurid glee.

There is the startling sensuality of:

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See gargantuan hooked fingers
Pluck in supreme flesh
To smutch supreme littleness.

The weird orgy comes to an end abruptly with five lines whose sweetness reminds one of morning bells tolling the darkness underground:

. . . some wizard vermin
Charmed from the quiet this revel
When our ears were half lulled
By the dark music
Blown from Sleep's trumpet.

After the metaphorical richness of *Moses,* the hard spareness of the images in *Trench Poems* may come as a surprise. Continued contact with the war inevitably led Rosenberg's poetry from the somewhat ideal experience of *Moses* into the harder realm of actual endurance. Some of the color and music fades to be replaced by steel, but there is a close relationship, nonetheless, between the earlier play and the later poems. And several of the *Trench Poems* reproduce with some directness the argument of *Moses.*

IN "Soldier: Twentieth Century," Rosenberg returns to his conception of a "great new Titan" strong enough to subdue the forces which an evil world has raised against him:

Cruel men are made immortal,
Out of your pain born.
They have stolen the sun's power
With their feet on your shoulders worn.

Let them shrink from your girth,
That has outgrown the pallid days,
When you slept like Circe's swine,
Or a word in the brain's ways.

When Rosenberg's concept of power is stated as directly as here and in *Moses,* there is a certain ambivalence in its meaning. If, indeed, the saving power of the individual which he would oppose to the destructive force of war is primarily an affair of the consciousness, a kind of inviolable spiritual integrity, why is it expressed so predominantly in physical terms?

Part of the answer is involved in Rosenberg's sense of race, and his strong attraction towards those men in Jewish history who were deliverers from both spiritual and physical tyranny. Redemption from the apathy of life and the horror of war was hardly imaginable to him as redemption under one aspect only. He had experienced poverty too deeply for that. And it was natural that a sensibility deeply impressed by Moses and Maccabaeus should find, when confronted with crisis, a militant, even a fierce symbolism and imagery congenial. But no rifles flowered in Rosenberg's poetry, and the conquest he envisaged always remained essentially a spiritual one.

ROSENBERG'S very last poems show how deeply he was coming to rely on the traditions of the Jews when he died. One of these poems deals with the burning of the Temple, another with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, and the last poem included in the volume deals with the Jewish persistent sense of exile. It is clear that in dealing with Old Testament themes he discovered a norm of reference and a moral security he could find nowhere else. He reveals in his last poem his growing insistence on Jewish positives:

Through these pale cold days
What dark faces burn
Out of three thousand years,
And their wild eyes yearn,

While underneath their brows
Like waifs their spirits grope
For the pools of Hebron again—
For Lebanon's summer slope.

They leave these blond still days
In dust behind their tread
They see with living eyes
How long they have been dead.

The Semitic faces in the first quatrain

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look out across the following lines towards the sources of Hebraic tradition and life, only to discover that their long separation from them has brought spiritual death. It was in a return to these sources, what in *Moses* he had called "the roots' hid secrecy," that Rosenberg looked for the authority to reject the sterility of modern life, of which war was only the most hideous expression.

The probable course of Rosenberg's literary career, and what its influence on the literature of the twenties would have been had he lived (he would be only fifty-eight today) may be an amusing form of speculation to anyone who admires his poetry, but that sort of parlor game cannot substantially help a reputation that must, after all, rest on work done. And in *The Complete Works* we do have an emphatic assertion of really great talent. One cannot help applying to him some lines of his own from "The Unicorn:"

Sudden the lightning flashed upon a figure
Moving as a man moves in the slipping mud
But singing not as a man sings, through the storm
Which could not drown his sounds.

MOBY DICK

A Reflection

EARL HENDLER

THE pure and sacred evil that was Ahab
split up the snapping seas. So absolute
his pride, from pole to pole no whale could hide.
Another's commerce, full of oil and drab,
would never play his line strung like a lute
with notes of harpoons struck in the whale's white side.

A spout from Moby's brow spilled some salt tunes
that jarred his metaphysics to the point
where God Himself could speak but in typhoons.
His world, lopsided, hobbled on one joint.
A lunatic's integrity that fails
on fish must justify itself to whales
of meaning larger than the simple quest,
and so his Pequod sailed abstractly West.

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UN BREATHING SPELL ON PALESTINE

A New Phase, But the Old Problems Remain

ROBERT WELTSCH

PARIS

THE establishment of an innocuous Conciliation Commission by the UN Assembly, with practically no terms of reference (even to its own partition decision of November 29, 1947), marked the abandonment of Count Bernadotte's plan. Significantly, his plan was wrecked by the opposition of both contending parties, as had happened to so many previous Palestine plans.

But the Arabs and Jews did not both reject it for the same reasons. The Arabs adhered to their old claim that partition was an injustice which could never be swallowed by Arabs, and that consequently no solution based on partition could ever be acceptable to them. They professed to ignore the existence of the Jewish state, and argued that it was an artificial structure which could not survive, thus opposing the Mediator's statement that the state was a "vigorous reality" that had come to stay. On this point they now disagree most strikingly with Britain, their main champion among the great powers.

Britain has apparently come to believe that the present policy of the Arab League hurts the Arabs themselves; and the British press has tried to convince the Arabs that the Bernadotte Plan, because it limits the expansion of Israel, was the most they could hope to get, and that its rejection might result in renewed fighting in which the Arabs would only be the losers. Nevertheless, as a matter of principle, the Arabs and their associates, including all the Moslem states, and India, Burma, and Cuba as well, remained intransigent. Thus the rejection of the Bernadotte Plan was essentially an achievement of the Arabs—but, at the same time, it was claimed as a victory by the Jews.

The Israeli leaders and world Jewry had vehemently denounced Bernadotte's Plan and started vigorous propaganda against it. To them it was not the principle on which it was based, namely partition and the Jewish state, that appeared unacceptable, but its practical proposals, especially with regard to frontiers. The new partition plan was roughly based on the military situation as of the beginning of September, when the Bernadotte Report was drafted, and it recommended that Israel surrender the Negev in exchange for Western Galilee and Jaffa. But possession of the Negev appears to be vital and indispensable to the government and people of Israel. Too, since the report was written even the argument of *fait accompli* in favor of an Arab Negev has collapsed, for in the meantime the offensive against the Egyptians in October had won Israel complete control of the Northern Negev. True, this action was challenged as a violation of the truce, and the Security Council on November 4 demanded that the Israeli withdraw to the lines they held on October 14. But the enforcement of this decision seems extremely unlikely, and in any case the *status quo ante* of October 14 cannot be restored.

THE propaganda against the Bernadotte Plan was very successful. It had its effect

ANOTHER UN Assembly deliberation on Palestine has adjourned with a final solution still unachieved. Yet, as ROBERT WELTSCH indicates in this appraisal, certain decisions were taken in Paris—among them the rejection of the Bernadotte Plan—and one or two milestones passed. What these were and what the perspective ahead seems to be Dr. Weltsch tries to suggest here. Born in Prague in 1891, Dr. Weltsch has lived in Palestine, where he has been editor of two weeklies.

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on everybody in Paris. The very name of the deceased Mediator became somewhat of a hostile slogan. All pro-Jewish forces that could be mobilized worked for the rejection of the Report, and the most important among them was naturally the United States. Consequently the British resolution, which embodied some of Bernadotte's suggestions, though in very emasculated form, was defeated by both sides, who could agree at least on negative points if not on a positive program.

Had the two parties been called upon to present their own proposals, they would of course not have been able to form a common front; and parliamentarily no resolution embodying any positive idea could find a majority. The British resolution, which represented the "Center," was defeated by the two wings. An Arab resolution condemning partition would have been—and in fact was—defeated by the combined vote of the 'pro-Jewish" bloc and the "Center"; while a "Jewish" resolution—for example, the Soviet proposal to withdraw all foreign armies from Palestinian territory—had against it the combined vote of the Arab-Moslem bloc and the "Center." It was a situation similar to that which paralyzed the government of Weimar Germany, where the extreme Left and Right together could combine to defeat the ruling centrist group, but neither wing could muster a majority for its own positive proposals, since in that case the Center would inevitably join the opposition.

Under these circumstances, the Assembly could do nothing except adopt a colorless resolution and to leave everything to the new Commission, which it charged to "assist the parties to find a settlement" (!). Everything now depends on this new Commission which has to start work all over again.

This outcome was regarded as favorable to the Jews insofar as they are now the stronger party and have come to feel confident that no commission will be able to unscramble the *fait accompli* omelette. In the absence of interference by force, the Israelis will remain for the time being the dominant party in Palestine and they are now in a position to develop and use freely the whole territory under their control, whether it is included in the November 1947 frontiers or not. And meanwhile there is the possibility that the rapid succession of events in Palestine itself may confront the new Commission with still more *faits accomplis.*

In the last stages of the Assembly, however, there did seem to be a remarkable inclination on both sides to ease the tension. This could be ascribed less to the UN discussions than to the local armistice conventions concluded by the Arab and Israeli commanders in the field. Here the Security Council comes into the picture. The Security Council did not confirm the November 1947 decision nor did it do anything to implement it. It ordered a cease-fire and a truce whose violation would be regarded as a defiance of its authority and simultaneously a "threat to world peace."

It was one of the peculiar features of this Assembly session that the Palestine problem was deliberated not only by the Assembly and its organs, but also and at the same time by the Security Council in its function as the highest authority in the supervision of the truce. This added to the general confusion that has characterized the whole Palestine issue. Theoretically, there is a clear distinction between the two approaches. The Security Council is concerned with breaches of the peace and has to devise ways and means of restoring peace or averting threats to it. In this respect, its function is purely "technical." The framing of long-range policy is the task of the Assembly, and this is handled by the First (Political) Committee, which has to refer it back for decision to the Plenary where a two-thirds majority is required. It should, however, be borne in mind that even the Assembly can do nothing more than to issue "recommendations" to member states. It does not create "international law," but provides a basis on which member states —and obviously states that are not yet members as well—can legitimately build their policies.

The dualism of Security Council and First

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Committee was made more apparent by the fact that many states were represented by the same individuals in both bodies, so that they had sometimes to repeat the same arguments on two different platforms. The issues were identical, and so were many of the speeches. The Arabs, led by Faris el Khuri, the aged and respected member for Syria, availed themselves abundantly of this opportunity. It was not good tactics, for the constant repetition had a wearying effect on all listeners, and in the end the Arab speeches became a nuisance and influenced nobody—though it remains very doubtful whether any speeches at all can have an influence in these bodies. For usually each state has its own predetermined policy, sometimes motivated by factors irrelevant to the issue, and is not interested in specific arguments.

THE real main issue in the Political Committee, behind the smoke-screen of words and phrases, was possession of the Negev. The Security Council, under British pressure, went so far as to envisage the use of "sanctions," according to Chapter 7 of the Charter, against the Israeli if they disobeyed the order to withdraw from their new positions there. But no one was enthusiastic about this, and the Security Council was obviously relieved when Israel, in a qualified manner, ostensibly accepted its order, leaving the details to technical negotiation on the spot; Israel was convinced in any case that these would demonstrate the impossibility of strict compliance.

This move was regarded as a diplomatic masterpiece. It showed that the youngest state in the world had already acquired complete mastery of the technique developed in the United Nations for combining conciliatory words with independent action, while relying on the fact that realities have their own logic. It was fortunate for Israel that the Security Council enacted another ("Canadian") resolution on November 16, before the chapter on the November 4 resolution was closed; this second resolution called upon the parties involved to enter into negotiations for an armistice that would open the way to a definite settlement. This gave the Israeli government the chance to link the two issues together and accept the second resolution enthusiastically while veiling its reservations with regard to the first. The reply as a whole was accepted as satisfactory and the threat of sanctions shelved, despite vehement Arab protests that logically the November 4 resolution (withdrawal of troops from territories in the Negev occupied after the truce) should be implemented first, before the issue of negotiations for an overall armistice could be acted on.

THE main aim of Jewish tactics was the splitting of the Anglo-American solidarity that had been proclaimed at the beginning of the session. It had been claimed that diplomatic negotiations between London and Washington, conducted during the summer, had bridged the gulf between the two powers. This united front, for a long time the main object of British dreams, crumbled again and was restored only artificially when the British, in a desperate effort to preserve it at all costs, practically gave up all the essential parts of their resolution by accepting the American amendments—this, in order to make it an Anglo-American resolution. This was done under a gentlemen's agreement that both sides would stick to the resolution. The United States loyally supported the resolution through its committee stage, and when the relevant paragraphs were defeated, the American delegation demonstrated by its quick substitution of an alternative formula that it had not felt too happy in its alliance with the British.

American policy throughout tended to play for time. The Americans wanted to give conciliation another chance, as unlimited as possible, in clear recognition of the fact that it would be futile to issue orders that could not be executed, quite simply because the United Nations has no executive powers. The United States did not seem to believe in the possibility of sanctions, let alone like them.

Yet one could still hear insinuations that British and American policy were secretly

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coordinated, despite appearances to the contrary; and it may be true that both the Foreign Office and the State Department would have preferred a common front. For after all the United States and Britain are the pillars of the nascent Atlantic alliance and cannot perpetually afford the luxury of fighting each other, even over such issues as Palestine.

The coincidence of the presidential elections with the UN Assembly was one of the main obstacles to swift action. The United States hardly concealed her desire to postpone the whole question. In the meantime, Secretary Marshall's support of the Bernadotte Plan was cancelled out by the President's declaration of October 24. The American delegation in Paris constantly awaited new instructions from Washington, and above all awaited the election itself. And it took a few days after the election before the American delegation overcame its reluctance to act.

When Palestine finally came up at the Political Committee, there arose a very unusual situation in which the chairman looked to speakers who were not forthcoming. Only the Arabs filled the gap, and their speeches were a foregone conclusion. Except for the delegations with clear aims, such as the Arabs and the Slavs—who did not want to be the first speakers and thus rid the UN of procedural embarrassment—most delegations were waiting for the United States to give the lead. But the United States preferred to keep silent, as on previous occasions. The Americans had to choose between British pressure and Jewish pressure. Evidently it is difficult for them to offend either. The real drama started when Philip Jessup made his first statement on behalf of the United States delegation on November 18. But after all the ups and downs of the struggle that ensued, which at times seemed to hint at a clear victory for Israel, actually nothing was solved and nothing decided.

PEACE is not yet established. Britain will not drop her strategic interest in the Eastern Mediterranean. Her troops remain in the Suez Canal Zone, and, as a result of her Negev defeat, Egypt seems even more susceptible than before to the advantages of an alliance with a great power. There is much talk of Egyptian readiness to make concessions to Britain that she hitherto had refused, which refusal had prevented a new Anglo-Egyptian treaty. Britain is also striving for a new foothold in Cyrenaica, where a protectorate on the Abdullah pattern is planned. But as things now stand, British strategic interests are in fact identical with those of the whole Western bloc. Logically, it is difficult to understand how America can dissociate herself from them, because it is no secret that the global strategy of the two powers is complementary.

Even Israel cannot be entirely indifferent to this question. Without the British bases in the Nile Valley and in the Middle East, could Rommel's attack have been repulsed in 1942? Whatever the present political alignments, we should never forget that El Alamein saved the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine and the embryonic state of Israel. It was not pure coincidence that Churchill, two days before the United Nations Assembly adjourned in Paris, made a fiery plea in the House of Commons for British *de facto* recognition of Israel. In this unfortunate world, where strategic interests have an overall importance, Britain's position in the Middle East cannot be altogether a matter of indifference or hostility to the state of Israel, which may one day stand to gain from them.

THE new Conciliation Commission was left with a legacy of three interconnected problems: peace, frontiers, population.

Peace still seems remote. But negotiations on a limited scale seemed possible when the Assembly dispersed. That is a result of the efforts of the Acting Mediator. Whether the occasional rumors of actual negotiations corresponded to reality could not easily be ascertained in an atmosphere where even such rumors are often the tools of propaganda, and where publicity is one of the greatest obstacles to reason. But it was Israel's policy to substitute the principle of "negotiations first" for any commitment on the main issue.

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The Arabs declined this. In their view, negotiations would be tantamount to a confession of defeat. The British, on the other hand, discouraged negotiations by saying that the Arabs could not be expected to negotiate "under duress"; a somewhat illogical formula because in warfare either party can always claim that benefit. The delegate from Lebanon said: "We know that the Zionists in Palestine are maintaining an effort that cannot last and which will fatally and inevitably bring about their economic ruin. It is for this reason that they are always asking to have negotiations opened. They hope by these negotiations to bring the Arabs to consent to the existence of the Jewish state." Or the Iraqi delegate: "Certainly an invader would wish to conciliate when his invasion is accomplished." And so forth.

These are the difficulties with which the Conciliation Commission is faced, and it is not easily seen how they can be overcome. The impasse is described in the late Mediator's Report. Like Bernadotte, the optimists set their hopes not on a formal peace, but on a *de facto* settlement that would be neither legal peace nor war but would rest on mutual tolerance, or on acquiescence under pressure from the United Nations.

As to boundaries, this is, of course, the crux of the matter. It will be very difficult for Israel to uphold its claim to the whole of the Negev, the whole of Galilee, Jaffa, and Ramleh, as well as the corridor to Jerusalem, on other grounds than the right of military victory. The majority of the UN Assembly would not have given its assent to such a settlement had the question been put to vote. The formulas employed by the American and British delegations seemed to indicate that both would ultimately recommend some partition of the Negev, i.e., a modified Bernadotte Plan, whereby the Jews would have to cede a southern strip of the Negev in exchange for Jaffa and Western Galilee. In any case, the UN and the principal powers concerned indicated that they would not bow indefinitely to the argument of military *fait accompli*.

The problem of Jerusalem presents special difficulties, for reasons often mentioned before. The internationalization and demilitarization of the whole Jerusalem area was the only point on which the Assembly seemed to be almost unanimous. It remains to be seen, however, what concrete scheme the Conciliation Commission will be able to devise. But in the end, if all goes well and some peaceful order is established, no other practicable scheme will emerge than to leave the Jewish section of the city under Jewish and the Arab section under some Arab authority. The United Nations cannot afford to make the Holy City a second Trieste.

THE most intricate point, however, is the population problem, which is usually called that of the "Arab refugees." Can the bulk of Palestine's Arab population return to the area now called Israel, and if it does, what will its relations be with the Israeli?

The Arab delegates, in innumerable speeches, exploited to the utmost the tragedy of the destitute evacuees. There was an appalling enumeration of atrocities; but by constant monotonous repetition the Arabs managed to overstate their case and make a great part of the delegations impatient. They became, in the words of Mr. Fraser, "weary of these tirades." The representative of Syria, Faris el Khuri, appealed to the Conference in the following terms: "No international political conference was ever asked to sanction looting, destruction, terrorism, assassination, and brute force, and this is exactly what you are being asked to do." Replying to the claim that the Arabs had left of their own free will, the same speaker said: "It was stated here that the Arabs left of their own free will, or that they wished to leave. It is rather surprising to hear that 600,000 of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine willingly left their homes without any of their jewels, money, or clothes, and even without some of the women having time to carry away their babies."

The Arabs made many blunders (as, for instance, their excursions into the field of Biblical history), but they cannot be blamed for exploiting the events at Deir Yassin and

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elsewhere and for representing them as the result of Jewish savagery. The Jewish reply, given by Aubrey Eban, was that this unnecessary war had been unleashed by the Arabs, and that as soon as a war starts it looses demoniac forces that no one can control. The responsibility for the consequences rested on those who had started the war. And the record of the UN and the Security Council contained open declarations of war on the Jews and the UN together by leaders of the Arabs.

The whole problem is undoubtedly very complicated. It is true that the Arab leaders encouraged the Palestinian Arabs to flee, but it is equally true that such an appeal would have been less likely to have the result it did had not the Deir Yassin outrage thrown Arab villagers into an understandable panic. And once the Arab exodus had started and its advantages—with regard to living space—had become clear to the Israeli, the latter apparently actively accelerated the exodus at certain other places, such as Ramleh and Lydda, and later on in the Negev and Galilee.

That is, of course, not a purely political issue. From the Jewish point of view, this chapter is one of the most disgraceful and saddening of our recent history. Gradually it has transpired that there is some truth in many of the charges made by the Arabs. And if the United Nations remains indifferent to this matter, we ourselves cannot. It is gratifying to see that there have been at least some protests in a section of the Hebrew press, and also an interpellation in the State Council, to which Ben Gurion is reported to have replied, on November 25, that a thorough investigation would be instituted. It is to be hoped that the results will be made known, and that strong and severe measures will be taken against the criminals. The Hebrew poet Nathan Altermann deserves all praise for the courageous and unequivocal song he published in the Hebrew daily *Davar* on November 19, in which he described what he himself had seen, and called it unhesitatingly "murder"—murder committed by Jewish boys. It was left to this lonely poet to demand that military courts be set up to try "Jewish war criminals."

It is an encouraging fact that such a protest could appear in the official newspaper of the leading government party of Israel. Altermann's poem was reprinted in the daily *Haaretz* of Tel Aviv, accompanied by an editorial which gave a sigh of relief that a man had at last arisen to say openly what was a heavy burden on the consciences of many.

The political, technical, and financial aspects of refugee resettlement were thrown on the Conciliation Commission. It will be a hard job indeed to solve these. But whether any Conciliation Commission can heal the moral wounds and uproot the seeds of hatred that have been planted remains, unfortunately, a matter of even greater doubt.

THUS, with the appearance of new men on the scene the Palestine problem enters a new phase. But the basic issue still remains that of Jewish-Arab relations. In view of the horrible things that have happened, conciliation will be an enormously difficult task. And actually the refugee issue is central, and far more important than any single detail of the settlement.

From the point of view of the United Nations, Palestine has been shelved for another year. The Conciliation Commission will report to the Fourth Assembly only in the fall of 1949; the second session of the Third Assembly, scheduled for April at Lake Success, will not deal with Palestine unless some emergency arises. In the meantime, however, the Security Council has still to implement its own resolutions of November 4 and 16. (Israel's application for membership in the UN, still on the agenda when the Assembly closed, has just been rejected.) Further action on the resolutions will now probably be left to the Conciliation Commission, while the possibility of Israel being granted UN membership in the future will remain a bargaining point.

This is a breathing space, and one can only hope that it will be used with wisdom, statesmanship, and a sense of Jewish values.

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MODERN ARTIST AS SYNAGOGUE BUILDER

Satisfying the Needs of Today's Congregations

PERCIVAL AND PAUL GOODMAN

OF ALL branches of culture, the plastic arts have been the last to be cultivated by modern Jews. With the opening of the ghettos and the Enlightenment, Jews moved rapidly to leading places in academic sciences, law, general letters, music—just as for a millennium previously they had well cultivated medicine, philosophy, poetry, and theology. Yet as little as fifty years ago one could find almost no great names of Jewish painters, sculptors, and architects. (The reasons for this tardiness are both complex and, to us at least, obscure.) But now in two or three generations there are innumerable Jewish names in the plastic arts: sculptors, painters, stage-designers, etc. Among Americans alone, from Jacob Epstein to William Zorach, from Max Weber to Abraham Rattner, from Mordecai Gorelik to Lee Simonson; and hosts of the young.

These are, of course, just artists of Jewish lineage, with varying degrees of Jewish home background. We need not expect from them a Jewish art at all, any more than a Jewish science or a Jewish music. How is their development relevant to a rebirth of what is even more specific, a Jewish religious art?

With respect to technique, we do not know what a Jewish technique in painting, sculpture, or architecture would be. With respect to subject matter, we should like to distinguish two classes: first, there are the subjects of Jewish genre realism, no different in kind from any other local depiction of the home life and street scenes of any other minority group. This kind of subject—its greatest extension has been in literature both in Europe and America—springs from sentimental or naturalistic, anti-sentimental impulses; and among the Jews it has perhaps the added pathos that the locale depicted is vanishing, has in many places already vanished. There has been no more continuous decline, and sometimes sudden and catastrophic finish, than of this Jewish scene. And this particular vanishing happens to have a peculiar religious significance, since in the last thousand years so much of Judaism has consisted just of minute observances in family life in tight communities. It is unlikely that this kind of painting, for instance, can —as has sometimes occurred with other national genre styles—develop into a big style; the theme, the locale, are going and gone; and the religiosity embodied in them has little life. We are thinking of the countless effigies of rabbis holding scrolls, synagogue interiors, old men at study; all done in a

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AT THE moment there is not only lively activity in synagogue building in these states, but there is a keen concern over the beauty and expressiveness of synagogue architecture and ceremonial objects and settings. So once again we hear hopeful voices prophesying an imminent renaissance in Jewish religious art. What are the chances? PERCIVAL GOODMAN and PAUL GOODMAN here appraise the new movement. Percival is an architect and in addition to his private practice teaches at Columbia University Architectural School. He is at present designing a number of synagogue buildings—among them Temple Beth-El in Providence, Rhode Island, the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation in Baltimore, Congregation Beth-El in New London, Connecticut, and others. Paul is a novelist and poet, holds the degree of Ph.D. (in philosophy) from the University of Chicago. This winter he is conducting a series of courses on art appreciation at New York University. He is the author of *The Facts of Life, The State of Nature, Art and Social Nature,* and other books. His most recent book is *Kafka's Prayer,* published by Vanguard Press. The brothers have collaborated on many works. The best known is their *Communitas,* published last year by the University of Chicago Press.

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chiaroscuro that is murky rather than dramatic, too learned to have the *élan* of the primitive, but learned in German and Russian academies rather than in the French schools that had some forward drive. (There are, of course, exceptions, like the genre pieces of Chagall and Ben-Zion.)

THE second class of Jewish subject matter among the artists, however, happens to be in a very favorable position, as favorable as the genre subject is unfavored; and the relevance of this kind to religious art is at once apparent. This is the grand-manner symbolical, allegorical, or ritual subject, freighted with a philosophical significance, and often drawing on Biblical material. Let us mention the recent big-branched candlesticks or the sacrificial images of Lipchitz as examples, or Chagall's illustrations of Bible texts. This kind of subject is analogous to that treated by great modern Jewish writers, Buber or Kafka. The reason that this kind is in a peculiarly favorable position seems to us to be the following: among the great Western theologies the Jewish has been the least subject to the corrosive effect of modern science and philosophy. Without making theological judgments, it is sufficient for our purpose to say what few will deny, that Jewish theology has suffered least because it affirms least, and it affirms what, in one sense or another, very few people would contradict: God is one, not a body, and the Messiah will come: these three propositions are almost the whole of the Orthodox creed.

And with these, subject to continual reinterpretation, there is a vast corpus of heroic stories and magical legends. These ancient stories, mainly the Bible stories, are archetypal in the psychoanalytical sense: Abraham is the father in every man, Adam is the innocence in every man, Jacob is the wrestler, etc.; when subjected to psychological and anthropological critique, these stories prove to be precisely relevant to us today. They are too legendary ever to be less than true.

The situation of modern artists, no matter what their background, is such that, in search of spiritual and heroic subject-matter, they find themselves on surest ground and with least inner doubt, in treating the Biblical or again the Hellenic symbols. (This has of course been true since the High Renaissance.) The more strong-minded they are, the more likely they are to treat these symbols, as Michelangelo did, or as Mann, Gide, or Cocteau do today. Furthermore, if the artist is concerned to portray social progress, the only great symbols to hand, unsullied by history and institutional or bureaucratic embarrassments, are those of the Prophetic tradition, the Peace of Isaiah or the Bones of Ezekiel. These symbols—the proposition that the Messiah will come—are the essence of social hope.

WE HAVE then premised, so far, a great tribe of Jewish artists; a vanishing local naturalistic scene; and on the other hand, a wealth of relevant heroic subject matter, already treated by many Jewish artists, and attractive to all artists in the grand manner.

Suddenly there occurred the fact that six million Jews were slaughtered in three or four years, just because they were Jews. We do not know in what ways other groups would react to such a happening, but among the Jews it seems to have had the following effect: they became aware of themselves as a physical community, a congregation. We mean in the barest physical sense. Not in any especial cultural way, not in a theological way (we do not hear anywhere a particularly authoritative prophetic voice); perhaps somewhat in a political way, in Zionism, for obviously Zionism is profoundly influencing all Jews, the non-Zionists and anti-Zionists as much as the Zionists. But most of all, and most simply of all, the reaction has been the sense of the co-presence of a certain identity and certain rudiments of a tradition, what we are calling the sense of being a physical congregation.

This has been true of Jewish intellectuals equally with other Jews. Whereas previously they had no especial concern with Jewish matters, now they are concerned with Jewish art, theology, the Bible, etc. (One of the

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authors of this article is in such a case.) To say it pessimistically, the general cultural and social ambiance seems so unreal that the physical congregation of the Jews appears to be a likely reality.

Omitting the debate and the action concerning Zionism, the chief effects of this congregational sentiment have been twofold: an increase in Jewish social work, philanthropy, and community centers—but these have always been strong Jewish drives, for many reasons; and secondly, an entirely new impetus in synagogue building. It is to this impetus that we must now turn.

It is estimated that there are eighteen hundred new synagogues being planned in the United States. Perhaps more important than this figure for our purpose: it is being proved possible to employ for the design of these structures architects and artists of world renown.

Let us mention the Liturgical Movement in several of the Christian churches, as described for instance by A. C. Hebert. Between the Liturgical Movement and this new building of synagogues there is an important similarity and there are important differences. The similarity is that the emotional and practical side of worship, the ritual, iconography, plastic design, and construction are brought to the fore. The differences are, first, that among the Jews there is no strong tradition, one might almost say no living tradition at all, of synagogue design and decoration—therefore serious artists must begin *de novo* to find a plastic interpretation for the tradition that does exist, namely the tradition of the congregation and the service.

We must insist a moment on this absence of plastic tradition. Conceive a meeting of an architect and the building committee of a Jewish congregation. They discuss the style. Georgian? Perhaps Colonial, like that delightful place in Newport? Or maybe to make it look like a Christian Science church? Or, again, Moorish because this is "traditional"? Specifically, what about the fenestration? Colored or clear? Broad? High? Obviously, in planning a church such a muddle would be inconceivable. Certain plastic presumptions compel themselves. The belfry will aspire; stained glass or no stained glass will depend on the theology. If, as in many modern Swiss churches, for example, a contemporary spirit is asked for, this will turn out as a modern statement of traditional arches and proportions, traditional verticals.

Certainly no blame attaches to the Jewish muddle; it simply reflects the late-coming of the Jews into the plastic arts, for a plastic tradition does not come from nowhere or from theologians, it comes from the work of many great artists. What is the way out of this muddle? Categorically: it is to employ the best modern architects working in their best functional and constructivist style. And so also with the painting and sculpture.

But a second, more hopeful, difference from the Liturgical Movement is this: there is no need, as in the Christian movement, to bring back the congregation into the service, reviving very ancient customs in order to do so; for it is the essence of the Jewish service to be the prayer and act of the congregation. The problem of design is simply to affirm this essence in a functional and beautiful way and to delete the aberrations that have crept in.

Perhaps we can make clear this important congregational point by describing the problem of the bimah or reader's desk. In the traditional Jewish service, the central act is the reading of the Law, passages of the Law and the Prophets being read in sequence, the whole Bible complete every year. For this reading members of the congregation are called up to the desk, more than a dozen during the service, counting the reading, undressing of the scrolls, etc.; and this group rotates through the congregation. Now for the Orthodox, this reading was done from a little platform in the middle of the floor, the congregation seated about, the reading directed toward the Ark on the east wall. (The congregational reading is the Offering.) The prayers of the cantor and his choir were also often, perhaps usually, offered from this middle space, from the midst of the congregation.

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But in the past century or so there grew up, among the Reform especially, an opposed conception of the main plan: namely, to face all the seats to the front as in a theater or lecture hall, toward the rabbi who leads the service and who lectures. This is clearly an imitation of the Protestants, but it is quite inappropriate to the Jews, because the rabbi is in no sense a priest or minister: he is not sacramental nor is he expected to have any prophetic inspiration; he is just one of the learned men, employed in the communal division of labor to give his time to congregational problems. The only religious actor is the congregation, and this is brought out by the central position of the bimah.

The central bimah gives scope for the colorful procession of the Scrolls from the Ark to the bimah and back, with song and honor, before and after the reading. From the bimah the opened Scroll is raised in the midst of the people, with the words: "This is the Law that Moses put to the people of Israel by God's mouth, by Moses' hand."

From the congregational function of the plan and design, many other things follow. For instance the lighting: the lighting must be clear, white and bright, and general, for the chief object of awareness is the sense of the whole congregation by each member of it. Again, it seems to us mistaken for the voices of the choir to come from some invisible place; they must rather rise from the midst.

On the other hand, so long as the fundamental tradition of the congregational service is maintained, the rest is free for invention—for there is no recent tradition of decoration and furniture, or of music, which has proved itself great, whether Orthodox or Reform. On the contrary, a study of the ancient furnishings of the tabernacle as described in Exodus can only make us see how paltry and colorless the recent centuries have been. Instead of the great sculptured branched candlestick we have had small bare things. An Eternal Light burns before the Ark, and this light has degenerated into an electric light. Also, both the ancient texts and the archaeological remains of ancient buildings show the structure embellished with every kind of human and animal figures, re-telling the history, symbolically projecting the meanings; the present restriction to a couple of jumping lions has become customary, but it is not traditional. And the same holds for the instrumentation of the music; the Orthodox disallow instruments, the Reform and Conservative employ the Protestant organ, but if the proscription is to be forgotten then the tradition seems to call for strings, pipes, and brass.

THE congregational sense of the Jews, we said above, expresses itself in the synagogue and its service, and in the philanthropy and community center. This twofold conception can be seen in the present building impetus, for the programs given by the building committees call almost invariably for a group of buildings, three in function: a synagogue, a social hall, a school.

Now the architects and artists are in a peculiar position. On the one hand, they try to carry out the purposes and express the feelings of their employers—to make the program function beautifully. On the other hand, the very act of analyzing function and expressing meaning makes the artists soon turn on their employers with persistent embarrassing questions and paradoxes; they point out inconsistencies in the program. To say it strongly, the building committees are not willing to have the functions really function, and the artists reach toward feelings that the committees are afraid to feel. Inevitably these paradoxes crop up in considering the synagogue buildings as a community center, for the Jews share with the rest of the population a lamentable failure and coldness of the sense of community; but the honest analysis of function and the expression of meaningful feeling demand that the community commit itself.

They ask for a complete school building; but, especially among Reform Jews, the building will function only on Sunday mornings. Yet no worthwhile educational program is possible without a staff giving full

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time and attention to just this work—in short a full-time school. The building must be "better than a public school building in order to attract the young"; yet no activity is proposed to make the building useful or interesting. What is the functional architect to do?

To give a particular instance: more or less elaborate musical provisions are called for in the synagogue, but they shy away from employing a competent musician to train a school choir, yet this would, again, be the essence of a congregational service, as well as a benefit to the general culture. The demand for a large school building shows a dumb awareness of the obvious necessity of the new generation to the survival of any congregation, and even the peculiar importance of study for the People of the Book; but actually to face the concrete functions of a going school—purpose, curriculum, staff—requires more commitment than anybody is prepared for.

They urgently demand a social hall; often the committee is willing to get along with the old house of worship, but it must have a new social hall. This is not unreasonable, because the Jews are a community within the community. All right, what are the functions? Mainly—it turns out—an annual banquet, an occasional lecture, wedding, or *bar mitzvah* celebration. A stage is asked for, but they do not seriously plan for a theater group in or out of the school. So for an occasional evening of use (food better than the usual institutional food, to be sure) there is a large expenditure on stone and steel. Many of the new buildings are suburban, the old congregations having left the center of the city. The sites are spacious, pleasant; but the aspiration seems to be toward a country club as the model of community activity.

It is interesting that a rectory, a house for the rabbi, is not asked for. The rabbi prefers to live elsewhere, otherwise "he cannot have a life of his own." He prefers to devote to this "profession" an eight-hour day. Besides, it is understood on all sides that the building will be permanent, unlike the rabbi; no use consulting him or relying on him too much for liturgical improvement or educational program; either he is looking for a larger place or the congregation is looking for a man who is more of a go-getter. Too often the rabbi is a pessimist: "The congregation is ignorant—they know nothing"—or an opportunist: "Our important people wouldn't like that."

Even so! The fact is that there is a physical Jewish community spending many millions on new buildings, looking for community function and asking artists to express the meaning of the religion.

To sum up: for the first time in modern history there is a tribe of Jewish artists; none of these has ever worked in religious building; at the same time, the greatest of them, like many other great modern artists, are concerned with the Biblical archetypes, the Prophetic tradition, and the simple sublime spirituality of Jewish theology. Then, there is the Jewish community suddenly brought to a new awareness of itself as a congregation and expressing or about to express a large part of this sentiment as a plastic action, building. Lastly, there is no strong recent tradition of design and decoration; there is need to go back to very ancient traditions, to reinterpret them in the freest contemporary way, and this is just what the great artists would do anyway. (In modern times one could not employ free artists under other conditions.) And on the other hand, there is a strong continuing tradition of the congregational service that must be liberated from its excrescences, and a sense of community concern that must fight its way to expression.

What it will all come to is impossible to predict. The whole point of the argument we have advanced is simply that this is something new among the Jews; it is a peculiar set of circumstances. One would be embarrassed to have to show any achieved works; there has not been time. But there are already interesting sketches, plans, blueprints, and, we hope, a lively spirit in the air.

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THE TIME MY GRANDFATHER DIED

A Story

WOLF MANKOWITZ

AT THE cheder to which my grandfather went as a pupil there was no privy. At least there was a privy but it was attached to the synagogue which the village millionaire had given to the community, and it was always kept locked except on Saturday when of course it was required. But at the back of the schoolroom there was a big piece of ground, and when a boy raised his hand in the middle of a difficult text the teacher used to say: "All right then, all right, go into the yard. I am waiting."

The teacher who was called Yaacov the Melumed was a short fat man with a black dusty beard which was going gray perhaps though you could not see that because of the dust. And he could only see the book by holding it up close to his face, although he never needed to look at it to see if my grandfather was reading wrongly, because Yaacov knew everything by heart, and anyhow my grandfather was usually reading wrongly. On a Friday, Yaacov used to go round to all the fathers of the boys he taught to collect his teaching money. And he used to make it a little more or less according to whom he was collecting from, and when he was teaching a boy for *Bar Mitzvah* he used to add a little for the extra strain on his voice and for writing the special *Bar Mitzvah* discourse which was spoken by each boy. It was worth the extra too because Yaacov was a clever scholar and every confirmation speech was different although there were the usual thanks in it to the boy's mother and father and to Yaacov as well, who was always called in these speeches "my learned and respected teacher, the scholar Yaacov ben Yitschok."

WHEN Yaacov himself used to go outside to the yard he left his oldest son (the one with pimples) in charge. This son was his cleverest and though he was very ugly he was regarded as a good prospective match because he had a good business head. Usually when his father went out he would unfold a paper which he had sent to him from Vilna and put it on the table in front of the class and offer the older boys who wanted to read a chance to look at a column of it for a kopeck. But it was no good paying him the kopeck and then expecting to read more than one column because he was very clever at covering up the part of the paper for which you had not paid, and he also watched your eyes to see where you were reading. And usually he was able to sell at least three or four columns to different boys while his father was outside, and so he was making quite a little sum of money out of his papers, as well as out of the butter-beans which he boiled at home and brought to the school to sell to the boys. Why his father was always so long did not bother him very much, naturally, since the longer he was away the better it was for selling newspaper space. And all the boys did not mind how long Yaacov was out in the yard because they could either read the paper or fight or eat the butter-beans which they had bought earlier from the clever son of Yaacov, and which they had been sitting on all through the lesson. As they used to wrap the beans in their handkerchiefs before sitting on them it was quite all right. My grandfather got a clean handkerchief every Saturday morning.

WOLF MANKOWITZ is an editor of the British periodical *Politics and Letters*. This story is one of a series depicting East European life; other stories from the series have appeared in the magazines *Tide* and *Modern Reading*, and have been broadcast over the BBC.

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Now often my grandfather used to see Yaacov the Melumed in the yard standing in one corner for a few minutes and then moving lower down the fence and standing there for a few minutes and then moving across the yard to another corner, and he thought that this was very unusual. Sometimes back at home my grandfather used to pretend he was Yaacov in the yard and would shuffle from one corner to another muttering to himself. Soon he became very good at it, and one day he took some of his friends into the yard and without saying anything to them shuffled from one side to the other muttering all the time, and all the boys laughed very much and kept on asking him to do it again. They told him that he was certain to become a teacher he was so good at being Yaacov, but he said no, he would sooner be a soldier even than a melumed.

After this he often used to make the boys laugh at cheder before Yaacov arrived. Then one day when the clever son was busy arguing with an older boy about whether he had been reading too much of the paper or not, my grandfather followed Yaacov out, and four or five other little boys followed my grandfather. As Yaacov shuffled from one place to another my grandfather shuffled after him and after my grandfather shuffled the other little boys. They found this so funny that afterwards whenever Yaacov went out to the back grunting to his son to look after the class, they followed him out and shuffled after him. And for a long time Yaacov did not know, and the boys used to even look forward to going to the school, until once when they trooped out Yaacov's son watched them and shouted to his father, and Yaacov turned and saw them for the first time, and chased them in, but he only caught my grandfather who was, after all, the smallest. Then he made my grandfather read a very difficult place in the Pentateuch and he made him explain the part which said: "Thou shalt not baste the kid in the milk of its mother." Now my grandfather knew that this had something to do with eating or not eating but he could not remember which, and after he had sat there with Yaacov breathing down on his face for some minutes saying: "Well then? What, what? Come on then, you learned one, tell me," he said that he found it hard to think of, and Yaacov shouted: "Oho! To mock his teacher is not hard for him, but to learn is too much!" And he gave my grandfather a very hard knock with a book on the back of his head and told him to get outside and go home to tell his father why his teacher refused to have him in the class.

My grandfather ran out of the class crying, and that was the only sound in the class for some while because Yaacov stood in front and glared at them all and no one dared to say a word or whistle or make even a slight noise by breathing too hard. But my grandfather stopped crying quite quickly, and even more quickly decided that he would certainly not go home to get into trouble with my greatgrandfather who being a pious man would certainly be very annoyed with my grandfather for making a nuisance of himself to the teacher. So my grandfather sat down in a ditch by the side of the road—as it was summer it was very dry and warm—and thought about the whole business. While he was thinking he found a spider running from under a stone so he caught it and kept it in his hand whilst he made a small hole surrounded with stones. Then he put the spider into the hole and pushed it about with a piece of straw making it go in different directions. All the time he was doing this he thought about how Yaacov the Melumed had hit him, and for no reason at all. Did all the boys laugh or did they not?

Everyone laughed and Yaacov hit him. And anyhow there had been others following Yaacov all over the yard, so why should my grandfather get the blame? And as for my greatgrandfather, he always sided with melumed. He always believed anyone who said that my grandfather had done this or that, had stolen some Hungarian plums or had knocked off somebody's best fur hat. My greatgrandfather was always saying that my

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grandfather was only good for a soldier, and that if the soldiers came to collect him they would only get thanks and a couple of kopecks from my greatgrandfather.

What was more, everything he did was wrong, and no one cared about him except to give him a knock on the head or to shout at him. And how should he know why a kid should never be basted in the milk of its mother? Who wanted to baste kids in milk anyhow. If he were a soldier he would show that Yaacov. He would throw his skullcap into some mud, and put dead rats in his house. And he would carry money on Saturdays and swear in Russian, and get drunk like Bonifas the Cobbler. He would even eat meat and drink some milk with it! When my grandfather thought of this abomination he stopped pushing the spider. He thought of it again and wrinkled his mouth as if tasting the two foods together. Or perhaps some roast liver with butter, he would eat together. Then he swallowed hard and sat up in the ditch and made a decision. If everyone said he was this and that, very well then he would show them, he would make them shocked and ashamed. My grandfather jumped out of the ditch and began to run home.

When he got to my greatgrandfather's house he stopped at the gate. Then he went round to the back, and tip-toed through the yard so that no one could hear him, and before going in, he looked through the kitchen window to see if my greatgrandmother was cooking. The kitchen was empty. My grandfather walked quietly in and opened the cupboard where food was kept. On one shelf were all the milk foods, buttermilk and milk from my greatgrandmother's cow which was called Masha, and cheese and butter. My grandfather put his finger into the butter and brought out some of it. But he put most of it back because he thought that there was after all no need to carry things too far. Then he looked over the other shelf where there was cold roast meat, and some boiled fish, and some pieces of chicken liver which my greatgrandfather was going to eat for supper probably. He took a small piece of liver, looked around quickly, and ran out.

My grandfather ran away from the house and up a hill where there were still trenches. The soldiers had come through a long time ago before even my greatgrandfather was a boy, and all they had left were a few coins and the trenches. When he got to the top of the hill my grandfather sat down. He put the small piece of butter onto one little bundle of grass and the piece of liver onto another. He thought of everything that everyone would say when they heard of what he had done; then he suddenly remembered something. All the boys, even some of the older ones who had been confirmed, had told him that if anyone ever ate milk with meat something terrible would happen not only to that person but to his whole village. My grandfather looked down from the hill-top and saw that in the village lights were going on in some of the houses. He saw a light go on in the baker's house just behind the baker's shop where for a farthing you could get fresh white rolls, and he tasted the crisp bread in his mouth. And he saw a light going on in his uncle Yossef's house and remembered that his uncle Jossef always gave him money on Hanuka. But he thought again of my greatgrandfather and of Yaacov and feeling very angry he quickly put the butter and the liver together and swallowed them.

Even as he felt the mixed taste go from his tongue, he began to feel sorry. He was sorry because he was already feeling slightly sick and because when he looked down towards the village he remembered that something bad was certain to happen to everyone there. And more than anything he was sorry because he remembered that Yaacov too had said that anyone who ate meat with butter would be certain to die young, and he was sorry because he was young. The more he thought the less pleased with things did he feel, and groaning quietly to himself but still feeling that at least he was the only boy in the village to

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die in this way, he rested in the trench and waited to die.

It became darker and darker and all the time the dew was falling as heavily as rain and the grass around my grandfather was becoming soaked. There was some long grass by his face, and some drops of dew fell from the top of this grass suddenly and ran down the side of my grandfather's nose. He jumped up quickly thinking that his last moment had certainly come. But it had not, and so he sat down again and leant his head against the side of the trench and thought about how sorry my greatgrandmother would be, even if he had eaten liver with butter. Then my grandfather fell asleep, but he did not sleep for very long however. He woke in less than half an hour for it had become very cold and he was not wearing his overcoat. And as soon as he woke up he felt hungry and as soon as he felt hungry he began to remember that he was dead and he could not eat. So he got out of the trench and saw that the village was still there, and he felt his face and found that although it was wet with dew it still felt like his face, and on top of everything he really was very hungry. Perhaps being dead was to be hungry and not eat. But, my grandfather thought, since he could walk, dead or not dead, he might as well walk in the direction of home.

WHEN he got back to the house, my greatgrandfather and my greatgrandmother were already beginning to eat. As my grandfather ran in, my greatgrandfather looked up and saw that there was something different in the face of his son. He had never seen my grandfather looking so pleased after coming back from school, and neither had he ever known him to come home so late. Usually he was back too early, running home as soon as he could get out, never wanting to stay to listen to the older boys. So my greatgrandfather smiled and said:

"Well then you are late, my son. Have you been learning for so long in the cheder?"

And my grandfather still looking very pleased said that he had. My greatgrandfather thought that perhaps he had been wrong before and that the goodness and the intentions of God were difficult for any man to be assured of, and he asked my grandfather what he had been learning. The only thing my grandfather could now remember was the piece from the Pentateuch about basting a kid in the milk of its mother, and this he told to my greatgrandfather, and he also told him that it meant that no one could eat liver with butter, and that if they did they would die young. My greatgrandfather was so pleased at my grandfather's knowledge, that he offered him some of the chicken liver my greatgrandmother had prepared for him alone. But my grandfather said no he could not eat the father's own food like that, and that he would rather eat some fish. And my greatgrandfather thought that this was certainly a miracle and that Yaacov the Melumed was a great scholar, and that my grandfather would certainly become a pious man and a teacher. Though my grandfather was thinking that he would be sick if he ever ate liver again even if he ate it without butter.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE FLESHPOTS OF MAINE

Portrait of a Down-East Jewish Community

TOBY SHAFTER

ALTHOUGH my home town is considered of average size for the state of Maine (population 9,000), I must in all truth admit that it is only another seacoast village masquerading as a metropolis. Though its Main Street is raw and new with a full quota of chain stores, supermarkets, and 5-and-10c emporia, it is still cobbled and it still smells of fish when an east wind is blowing. The parking meters recently installed on Main Street after a full year of controversy among the town fathers made national news when an individualistic citizen insisted on hitching his horse to one without paying the usual fee.

The town itself hugs the south shore of the harbor, with the principal industrial area and the ugly Main Street pre-empting the splendor of the harbor view for a good mile and a half. The slum areas, which are near the principal commercial dock and the lime-reducing kilns at the waterfront, face the colossal and expensive summer hotel on the north shore. The better residential sections fan out directly behind Main Street in a half-mile radius inland. Within a half-circle of two miles by one, the streets are more sparsely settled and gradually give way to farm houses or country homes situated near the many tiny "villages" (post office, general store, and the inevitable white clapboard school house for elementary grades) that are incorporated with our township. Within three miles of town there are forests, mountains, lakes, and streams, to say nothing of the various sumptuous private estates with stables, tennis courts, and golf courses. The sprawling, turreted Samoset Hotel—painted bright yellow and set among cool gardens at the oceanside—dominates the north shore, but its wealthy patrons cannot buy exclusiveness, for the public breakwater and lighthouse are hard by its grounds and the young people from town who go swimming and fishing there cut across the hotel's golf course. The more beautiful and unspoiled sections of the south shore are exclusively the domain of the natives or descendants of the natives who own the modest summer cottages there.

Our economic structure is peculiar. Although the town is in the heart of the vacation region, it cannot depend upon the summer tourist trade; this is absorbed by the smaller surrounding towns which specialize

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PREVIOUS articles in this department have drawn portraits of various American Jewish communities: for instance, New Haven (November, 1947) and "Spruceton" (June, 1948). In the near future, we hope to have Minneapolis and Los Angeles take their turns. Here, TOBY SHAFTER looks beneath the surface of a small community in Maine. Explaining the genesis of this article, Miss Shafter writes: "Except for college vacations and frequent holiday visits to my family, I had not lived for twelve years in the small town on the Maine coast where I was born, brought up, and educated through high school. Early last spring, I returned for my first prolonged stay. I came eager to sample the joys of a Maine spring and summer as described in *Holiday* magazine with the aid of our Chamber of Commerce. After six months, I departed with somewhat mixed feelings—as you can see." Miss Shafter now lives in New York, where she does free-lance writing.

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in medium-priced resorts. Our town hotels are exclusively commercial and are located in the heart of the business section. The bay is dotted with islands, and both the islanders and the farmers who crowd into town on Saturday afternoon and evening account for a large percentage of the seasonal and year-round trade.

There are certain small industries in town—a bathrobe factory, a fish-freezing plant, a sardine-canning factory, the lime kilns, the granite quarries, and the shipyards. Our town once had a proud seafaring and ship-building tradition, but now there is only a fleet of fishing boats. The lobster fishermen are still independent enterprisers, but all the other industries are now owned by outside interests. Even the fishing boats are being bought up by large companies and their former captains put to work for wages. There is small opportunity for great personal success in our town. The population either works or clerks.

So it is not surprising that the not inconsiderable number of native sons and daughters who have made good (they include America's most famous woman poet, a contemporary composer, an opera singer, a well-known photographer, and many others) have had to do so well outside the limits of our town.

PREDOMINANTLY white and Protestant, our town has a few small but distinct minority groups. The Italian colony of perhaps eighty families is concentrated on a waterfront street facing the lime kilns. The wealthier Italians live scattered through the town, as does the somewhat more prosperous Jewish group of about thirty-five families. The Scandinavian contingent (mostly Swedish and Finnish) have farms on the outskirts of town.

The blond Finns and Swedes are, of course, readily acceptable to the older British and German stock. There has been intermarriage to a somewhat lesser degree between the "natives" and second-generation Italians and Jews; a number of future Daughters of the American Revolution will bear names like Mazzini and Rubenstein as well as the now generally accepted Scandinavian patronyms. There is one Negro family in town consisting of a dark-skinned father and three mulatto children. The daughter, who was a classmate of mine, married a white man.

It is true that there was—and still is—a certain definite social clannishness. This is made manifest by a glance at the "society" column of our semi-weekly eight-page local newspaper: in most reports of social events such as bridges, birthday parties, anniversaries, dinner parties, etc., the names will belong overwhelmingly to one group. During school years there is more fluidity in social relationships among all groups, but marriage ties and adult responsibilities seem to cement social barriers.

During the past decade or so, the vitality and position of the minority groups—particularly of the Jews—has deteriorated. This situation has come about partly through an increase of prejudice, partly from a growth of fear within, and partly, in the case of the Jews, from apathy and a loss of old Jewish values with no replacement by new ones. With the passing of the old guard—the immigrants with roots in Russia, Poland, or Lithuania—the Jews in town no longer have the lusty and perhaps misguided enthusiasm for Jewish affairs that once led to the founding of two synagogues and two cemeteries—all this in a town that has never had more than thirty-five Jewish families!

MATERIALLY, however, the Jews of our town have made great strides since the early days when a few East European settlers arrived by accident or design on the shores of what was then a forsaken, muddy fishing village. In the beginning, the immigrant families lived in virtual squalor in a tight cluster of houses by the waterfront. Most became peddlers of one sort or another, one was a farmer, and a not inconsiderable number were petty bootleggers (Maine was a dry state long before the prohibition era). There was a thriving community life. A rabbi who was also *shochet, chazan, melamed,* and deliverer of bread and meat was imported. As the peddlers became shopkeepers and the others found worthy occupations, they bought houses in all sections of town. In a few years, a local Baptist church (with the baptismal font still to be seen in the cellar) was purchased and remodelled into a synagogue.

The rabbi was not only spiritual head of the community, but also assumed the impor-

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tant duty of extricating hapless members of his flock from the clutches of the law by testifying in court that liquor and vinous spirits were essential to the religious ceremonials of Israel. Every year there was a major crisis at the election of a president for the congregation, with partisan factions campaigning vigorously for months in advance. One year the campaign engendered so much bitter feeling that the defeated candidate and his supporters withdrew from the synagogue, rented a hall over the Salvation Army quarters, and conducted weekly and holiday services there for more than a year. When one of their members died, they purchased a large lot in the country and founded a second cemetery. Never before or since was there such enthusiastic interest and attendance in the synagogue. Finally, tiring of their makeshift temple, the protesting faction, which by now numbered more than half of the Jews, decided to retake the synagogue building by storm. They filed a civil suit in the county court claiming that the others were forcibly preventing them from praying in the official house of worship. The judge bade them re-enter the original congregation, pay their annual dues, and become members in good standing so that they could vote in the next annual election. With the cessation of hostilities, attendance soon dropped to a bare *minyan*.

Today there is one synagogue, well kept but virtually unused. Although there are no fewer Jews in town than before, there are no regular Friday night or Saturday morning services: it is impossible to obtain a *minyan* except for the High Holidays and an occasional memorial service for the dead. The Hadassah chapter, which is fairly active, meets in the vestry and holds its social and fund-raising functions there. The men had formed a B'nai B'rith lodge, but were so inactive that the charter was revoked last year. Shamed into action, the officers succeeded in having the charter restored by the payment of back dues, but the situation itself has not been remedied. There are no lectures, cultural groups, or discussions. Once a year, the United Jewish Appeal sends a speaker to raise funds. This meeting does little to advance knowledge or interest in the plight of the Jews overseas and in the problems or promise of Israel. Aside from the sum collected (about ten thousand dollars this year) its chief by-product is petty gossip and grievances over the assessment of each person.

The only bright spot in the picture is the weekly Sunday school. Meeting for two hours and including all the children of grammar school age, the school was organized about two years ago and has met with enthusiastic response from the pupils themselves. The founder was a professional worker employed by the Maine Jewish Council which has its headquarters in Lewiston. Through its efforts thirteen rural Sunday schools were founded in small towns where none had existed for years.

The greatest difficulty lies with the adults. The entire burden of the school is carried by two women who serve as volunteer teachers, and the project is financed by the ten-cent contributions of the students. Next year, one of the women will not be able to continue, and unless someone comes forward to take her place (which is unlikely), Sunday school will be discontinued. This year it is functioning only by grace of an eight-year-old boy who cajoled his mother into teaching, certainly a reverse of the situation in the usual large city Sunday school. I know from bitter experience how unruly and indifferent the average middle-class city child is to his weekly exposure to Judaism; but when on a recent visit I took part in a few of our town's Sunday school sessions to teach Palestinian dances, I was struck by the general vitality, as well as by the fact that fully one-third of the children were only half Jewish.

INTERMARRIAGE would seem to be almost inevitable under the circumstances. The surprising thing is that there is not more of it. In the past twenty years, there have been exactly two cases in which a local Jewish boy married a local Jewish girl. What has kept the Jewish population constant as families have moved away and older people have died is the fact that most young adults leave the town for a more or less prolonged absence at some time or another during marriageable age, and a fairly large number return with their mates from afar. A number of young men married Jewish girls during the war at army posts and in cities where they were stationed. More men marry than women; the Jewish spinsters in town

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far outnumber the bachelors. Intermarriage, too, appears to be overwhelmingly in the male domain, a result, presumably, of the greater social freedom enjoyed by the teen-age boys. The few women who marry Gentiles, generally marry somewhat above their social and economic class. The men tend to marry Gentile women of their own social class or below. (Their mothers, of course, always claim that they marry beneath them.)

Nearly every "old" Jewish family with children of marriageable age has been affected in one way or another by intermarriage. Although there is always much sadness on the part of the immediate family and much sympathetic clucking of tongues from friends, the announcement that a young man is about to marry or has already secretly married a *shiksa* hardly creates a sensation by now. The few Jewish girls who have married Gentile men have, on the other hand, been subject to vehement criticism, coffee-hour gossip, and unending speculation. In all cases except one, they have not remained in town. The one girl who did marry a native state-of-Mainer is completely divorced from the Jewish community. On the other hand, the Jewish men who marry outside the fold retain some semblance of attachment to the Jewish community. They generally attend the high holiday services and send their children to the synagogue for Sunday school lessons even though they and their wives do not mingle socially with the Jewish "crowd." The two "imported" Jews (a young man and a young woman, both from New York, who married local Gentiles) are completely assimilated: the Jewish community feels no responsibility for them, has no ties with them, and makes them the objects of a mild, but very real, derisive amusement; their first tentative overtures were severely ignored and they have since turned to their in-law families and friends for companionship.

Intermarriage has not been limited to the younger generation. The vanguard of Jewish settlers had their renegades and "lost generation," too. These few cases of intermarriage twenty or thirty years ago produced no children and the participants were ostracized. The line between acceptance and rejection in a mixed marriage is finely drawn. The history of one family's alliances and misalliances illustrates the point. The father (of the older generation: born in Russia but brought to America in his teens) made a second marriage with a Gentile woman and was soundly berated by the entire community for setting a bad example to the children of his previous marriage to a Jewish woman. One son and one daughter married Jews (in Boston) and the daughter returned to our town with her husband and infant son. Two sons married local Gentile girls; one is completely assimilated, but the other has amicable relations with other Jews, his Gentile in-laws (who were not too fond of him at first), and his Jewish relatives, and sends his two boys to the Jewish Sunday school. The youngest daughter, now eighteen, has just announced her engagement to a local Gentile boy and automatically became the object of much comment. There is a certain restraint in the comment of Jewish families on the subject of intermarriage. "You can never tell when it will happen to you," they explain sadly, placing it in much the same category as cholera.

ALTHOUGH there has been a comparatively large percentage of intermarriages, the Jewish community in our town is by no means on the point of disintegration. Outside forces have stayed the tendency toward complete assimilation. Most of the Jews in town are concerned with the growth of social and economic discrimination that has taken place since my childhood; it is hard to tell exactly what has caused it, but the increase in prejudice is undeniable. As a child and from a child's point of view, I remember no striking instance of anti-Semitism. It was rumored falsely that the Samoset Hotel was "restricted" (but we did not even know the term). In any event, that was a different world, a world of wealthy "summer people" who could afford to pay extravagant rates for their exclusiveness. The hotel was owned "away" and did not affect in any way the essential life of the town. I do have one frightening memory of a Ku Klux Klan parade the length of Main Street which I witnessed as a child of perhaps five or six. Although it had been a warm summer day, the sight of the white-robed, masked men marching with measured step behind the flaming cross sent chills up and down my spine. Since the parade was not followed by any overt act against the

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small number of Catholic and Jewish families, and the most respectable men in town openly belonged, the impression of terror soon faded and I classified it as a sort of mystical secret society like the Masons. The Klan in our vicinity soon disbanded, I suppose, for I never again saw a parade or heard of any local chapter activity.

The growth in anti-Jewish sentiment, it should be made clear, has not reached alarming proportions. No vandals have desecrated the synagogue. Both Jewish cemeteries are safe. The Jewish business men still belong to Rotary, the Lions Club, the Masons, and the American Legion, on the assumption that "it is good for business." Outside of formal meetings and business dealings, however, there is very little contact between Jew and Gentile on the adult level. For the past few years, it has become the custom to hold an annual interfaith meeting during "Brotherhood Week" among all the Protestant sects and the Jews (the Catholics refuse to be included). One such meeting was held a few years back in the synagogue with a Baptist minister in the pulpit. The Gentiles were deeply impressed by the dignity and beauty of the synagogue as well as by the gracious hospitality. Even the Jews themselves were impressed: they all remarked that never before had there been a congregation in the *shul* that was so orderly, so well behaved, and so attentive. (Even today and on Yom Kippur the woman's gallery is generally a source of noise and confusion, which periodically has to be checked by shushing from downstairs.) This year the interfaith meeting is taking place in the form of a "World Day of Prayer." A kind of evangelical pageant will be presented in which the two best-looking young Jewish matrons have been assigned prominent roles. The frame of mind with which the Jewish community is approaching the problem of interfaith amity is perhaps best exemplified by the wealthy Jewish widow who made a point of warning all the other women not to wear their mink coats to church when they attended the services.

THE widow's anxieties are not wholly without foundation. When a classmate of mine and her husband bought a house on one of the better streets in town, the neighbors objected to "another Jewish family moving in." Twenty-five years before, when the first Jewish family had established itself diagonally across the street, there had been no such difficulties. As a child, my friend never had to contend with the prejudice which her eight-year-old son encounters every day of his life. She doesn't quite know what to do about it. For instance, she is somewhat disturbed, when she has occasion to attend some function at the high school auditorium, by a prominently displayed bust of Charles Lindbergh. She is the secretary of the alumni association and had been on the verge of taking the matter up with the high school principal a number of times. But she felt a little shy about broaching the subject because, although she had lived in the town all her life and married there and been one of the outstanding students and popular girls in high school, she was not sure that her viewpoint would be understood.

Perhaps, from a practical point of view, my friend's instincts are sound. There was a great deal of local excitement one week. The school board attempted to dismiss the high-school principal after nineteen years of continuous service. The sympathies of the townspeople were with the ousted principal, who had been charged with incompetence and non-cooperation. The high-school students went on strike and rode wildly about town one afternoon in paper-decorated jeeps, roadsters, and family cars with banners flying and placards proclaiming, "We want our principal!" I heard a storekeeper say the students shouldn't have done it—it was too radical—but he and all the other people in town solidly backed up the principal. Outside of my own unexpressed feeling, I heard only one dissenting opinion. A Jewish woman who had herself grown up in the town and graduated from the high school ventured to say that she thought it was high time that he be replaced with someone more progressive. To justify her position, she proceeded to relate somewhat reluctantly an episode that had occurred a few years back.

Her son—at the time a sixth-grade student of ten—had been beset on his way home from school by three high school boys of fourteen, called dirty Jew and assorted synonyms, and followed and badgered the entire mile to his home. Then, when he was within a short distance of the house, the bigger boys had beaten him savagely and he

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had fallen into his grandmother's kitchen with his face a bloody mass and his two front teeth hanging out. Later, the mother visited the principal of the high school, related the episode, and suggested that perhaps he ought to initiate a series of talks on tolerance at the high school. The principal dismissed her with a curt, "Sorry—there's nothing I can do about it." Only a very few people—not even the boy's best (Catholic) friend—know of the incident. He himself never mentions the story directly, but I have heard him remark bitterly, "If my mother had taught me to fight, I wouldn't have two false teeth today." In my time, such untrammeled violence would have been unthinkable. At most, a childish quarrel might result in a little name-calling.

If the school fails so in fostering good will, what is one to expect in the competition of the business world? In recent years, the Jews themselves have begun to feel alarmed by their own prominence and success. The Samoset Hotel has been bought by a Jewish corporation and the names of many wealthy Jews appear on the guest roster, which is published semi-weekly in the local newspaper together with sprightly summaries of the gay "doin's" at the hotel. In addition, much local real estate—some of it country tenements and slum area—has been bought by Jews. There has been a small influx of "new" Jewish families who have set up haberdashery or clothing stores on Main Street and, as they have prospered, bought the adjoining properties or the "blocks" in which their stores are located. Today the largest hotel, two of the three haberdashery stores, three furniture marts, a book store, a wholesale candy store, a rather famous antique shop well known for its showroom, and two women's clothing stores—all on Main Street—are Jewish-owned. My mother, who has lived in the town for more than thirty years, feels that it is dangerous for the Jews to own so much conspicuous property on Main Street. Many others share her anxiety.

In addition to half the stores on Main Street, the list of Jewish enterprises includes two garages, the large wholesale meat business (non-kosher, of course), three city hotels, two junk yards, two chicken-shipping concerns, and sundry real estate. Only one Jewish family owns a grocery store—a small neighborhood affair which a former blacksmith (still known as *der Schmidt*) started when horses went out of general use. There is one Jewish tailor in town—the only representative of the artisan class. Two of the town's three cocktail lounges are Jewish-owned. (Our town is still the only wet spot in the county.) One of the two is steadily patronized by the Jewish crowd; the second —inelegantly nicknamed "The Body Exchange"—is studiously avoided and its proprietor termed a "disgrace to the other Jewish people."

In choosing occupations, the Jewish boys follow very closely the pattern established by their fathers. There are, to be sure, deviations, expansion, and rebellion, but in the main one still finds the son of a used car dealer established in a thriving automobile agency, the butcher's two sons carrying on a wholesale meat business, the haberdasher's son installed in a bookshop, etc. Many of the boys have been sent to college and trained in business administration, but few have shown any aptitude or desire to enter the professions. The very few doctors and lawyers the Jewish community has produced have settled elsewhere—a vocational phenomenon utterly unlike that of the general trend. There is one Jewish lawyer who married a local girl and settled in town with her. He does not practice extensively, as he finds real estate transactions more profitable. One practicing physician is a converted Jew, but since he is from "away" and persists in singing in the church choir, he has been gladly relinquished to the Christians. The large majority of the boys born and brought up in our town establish themselves and their families there, after an initial fling in a large city. Almost without exception they seem to consider life there paradise on earth, or a reasonable facsimile thereof.

Our town still has old-fashioned ideas about careers for women, and consequently few of the girls have received any vocational training beyond the commercial high school course fitting them to be stenographers or bookkeepers. The girls from the wealthier Jewish families who have been sent to college are nominally teachers but they have never taught beyond one year, their major energies being most naturally

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concentrated in pursuit of a husband. The sole ambition of most of the single girls tied down by either family or business responsibilities is to escape to a large city, for they find life dull, dateless, and aimless. In the meantime, they live an effortless, lazy sort of half-life—keeping house for the widowed father, helping out in the store for a few hours each day, meeting the other "girls" (this includes all females from fifteen to fifty) for coffee every afternoon punctually at 3:15. The monotony of the single woman's existence is unrelieved except for an occasional visit to relatives in the big city. All the Jewish girls in our town dress expensively and well, and when they go to the city they indulge in shopping sprees, go to see a good "legitimate show," garner a few dates if at all possible, and return to spend the rest of their time growing older year by year.

The young matron's day, on the other hand, is busy, full, and satisfying. She finds the semi-countrified environment ideal for bringing up small children. She has more freedom, more ease, and more recreation than the average city housewife in a similar economic stratum. Like her husband, she feels herself to be "somebody" in town, not an anonymous unit among tens of thousands of others. She belongs to Hadassah and occasionally joins the Red Cross or the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Hospital. In the winter there are meetings and social affairs and in the summer there are picnics and beach parties. Her husband may belong to Rotary, the Elks, the American Legion, or the Lions Club, but their social life is almost exclusively with other young Jewish couples. No Jews belong to the country club or the yacht club, nor do they seem to want to. So far as I know, there is no exclusion policy, for my brother moored his speedboat at the yacht club basin for a small fee and I used to play tennis at the country club on the same basis. It is simply that few of the Jews in our town are athletically inclined: the men, it seems, are wrapped up in business and find their relaxation in stag card parties; the women played mah jong when it was the rage, but have now returned to bridge. There is little Jewish atmosphere in the home life of the average young couple. They send the children to Sunday school and sometimes to a Jewish camp. The rules of kashruth are not observed, though there may be gefilte fish on Friday (if mother makes it and sends it over) and matzoth for Passover.

The older people in town have grown so accustomed to the easy tempo of life there that they couldn't live anywhere else. The long monotonous winter with its clear, cold air and bright skies, its soft, white snows and frosted panes; the slow-coming spring, the rains, the mud, the fogs; the cool, all-too-short summer, and the glory of the autumn—all this has totally unfitted them for the noise and dirt and hurry of the city. Being a Jew in a small town has its own peculiar problems. In a large city it is possible to surround oneself with friends of similar tastes and views. In a small town one knows, and lives with, everybody. Jewish life is inevitably influenced by the forces surrounding it. The overwhelmingly Gentile atmosphere and the desire to be modern have caused even the old guard—the Yiddish-speaking immigrants—to relax the strict orthodoxy they once practiced. A few who once kept kosher homes no longer do so, and with the zest of the newly converted have developed ravenous appetites for lobster stew, steamed clams, and other delicacies of the Maine shore dinner. Those who still retain their orthodoxy censure the new "reform Jews" even more severely than they do the free-thinking, high-stepping younger generation born in this country. Yet they freely admit that orthodoxy has its culinary disadvantages. In a far-off day which I cannot remember the town employed a rabbi who doubled as *shochet* and *melamed*. But within my span of memory, we have always ordered our meat from Portland which is approximately one hundred miles away. The meat, not the best cuts to begin with, arrives by mail in a more or less fetid condition, or even worse on a hot summer day. Jewish rye bread comes by a different route but not in a more edible condition. Until I went away to college, I had never tasted rye bread that was not stale. Happily enough, "reform Judaism" has not made such great inroads on the gastronomic prowess of the older Jewish women; they still maintain their cunning with *strudel, borscht, kneidlach,* or *tzimmis*.

THE scenery is still superb. Yet beneath the even tenor of life there—embellished by the incomparable jagged rocks, towering

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pines, and the jewel-blue bay dotted with islands—one can observe a certain nostalgia over the gradual weakening in the real ties that once bound together the Jewish community.

Some of the Jews hanker for the "good old days" of the war between the synagogues. One old man of the rebel faction bemoaned the fact that now it is almost impossible to summon a *minyan* for Friday night or Saturday morning services, and a job of herculean proportions to get together ten men *and boys* to commemorate a *Yortseit;* the only time that a full congregation is assured is during the three High Holidays. I, myself, recall some of the traditional celebrations of my childhood—the Simchas Torah festival when all the children marched around and around the main hall of the synagogue with lighted tapers decorated with flags and apples, the luscious fruits that we enjoyed afterwards (that particularly stands out in my memory), the Purim plays that we used to rehearse for months in advance and the big party in the vestry that followed them, and the political excitement that centered about *shul* business and elections. Now the spontaneous interest in the synagogue and the cohesiveness of the Jewish community seems to have vanished completely.

Undeniably, there is a definite amount of psychological yearning for things Jewish. Indeed, if these people knew where to find them, they might attach themselves to Jewish values which could give meaning to the inner Jewish longing which they feel but which the old trinity of kashruth, prayer, and charity no longer satisfy. If they are concerned with intermarriage, it is not only as a family disgrace and a town scandal, but also as a threat to their Jewish existence. And above all they are concerned about their children. The children themselves—and this is perhaps new—are anxious for a Jewish education—because they want to "belong" somewhere. Their schoolmates go to church every Sunday and of course have Sunday school and other church functions to attend. Public opinion in a small town wouldn't permit a Jewish child to attend church—besides, his parents would be ashamed of the situation. The child, therefore, seeks to duplicate the church experience within his own group—often fruitlessly. Sometimes the child is successful in an isolated instance. For example, this year Simchas Torah night was celebrated at the insistence of one seven-year-old boy, who remembered "marching around and around in the *shul.*" He approached an older man (not his father, who is indifferent) with his request, and, because he was so anxious, a full-fledged celebration was organized on the spur of the moment in the synagogue. As far as a Jewish education for the children is concerned, it seems to be a case of the tail wagging the dog.

It is clear that the Jews in our town, though they obviously want something from Judaism, don't really know concretely what they want. Talking to them about it, the most one can find is a wistful desire to regain and carry on that old vague sense of pride and satisfaction at being a Jew. They want it because their children seem to need it, they remember how much it meant to their own families, and they simply can't reconcile themselves to its disappearance—knowing that when that is gone, the Jewish group as a group will be gone with it. And that threat, above all, evoking some vestigial but nonetheless real emotion, makes them deeply unhappy—occasionally.

All elements—the old and the young, the orthodox and the iconoclast, the rich, the poor, the learned, and the ignorant—agree that there is a crying need for a young, "new-style" rabbi. Periodically, the conscience of the community is aroused. Last autumn a boy observed his thirteenth birthday without becoming *Bar Mitzvah.* His parents quite sincerely felt that it would be a hypocrisy to have him go through the empty motions of *Bar Mitzvah* ceremony without being able to take his place in the congregation. This incident led to new inquiries about the possibilities of obtaining the services of a young rabbi. As usual, the discussions soon ran into the hard fact that the annual salary of a properly educated young rabbi would be well up in the $3,000 bracket. As usual, the townspeople felt that this was beyond their financial means, and there followed the usual stalemate. For the time being, they seem resigned to the situation. The Maine scenery is still beautiful, business is good, lobsters remain plentiful. *Man lebt*—or does he?

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

REASON AND FAITH

An Early Medieval Synthesis

SAADYA GAON

SAADYA (BEN JOSEPH) GAON, one of the greatest of all Jewish philosophers and theologians, was born in Fayyum in Upper Egypt in 882, the son of a poor but learned man. Educated in both the Arabic and Judaic traditions, he went as an adult to Palestine to continue his studies. His writings, among which are the first known Jewish prayer book, a Hebrew dictionary, a commentary on the Bible, and—even more important—the first translation of the Bible into Arabic, not to mention a great body of polemical writings against the Karaites and sceptics—demonstrate that he had the secular as well as the religious learning of his time at his finger tips. But it was the time he was born into, just as much as his own talents, that enabled Saadya to play such an epochal role in Jewish tradition, laying, as Dr. Alexander Altmann points out, the foundations of "scientific" medieval Jewish scholarship in general as well as of Hebrew philology.

Saadya's main task as a theologian was to reconcile Jewish religious revelation with the rationalism then pervading Arabic culture as a result of the rediscovery and dissemination of Greek philosophy and science by the Mohammedan world—which at that time coincided to a great extent with the orbit of creative Jewish culture. Saadya had an advantage over his Islamic contemporaries in that Judaism had already assimilated a good deal of Greek rationalism during the period of Hellenism. Nevertheless the challenge of rationalism, amid the conflicting religious philosophies of Saadya's time, was even greater than it had been before, and the rewards of success in meeting it proportionately larger. Saadya became the pathfinder in whose steps followed, not only Maimonides, but also in a sense Aquinas.

Appointed Gaon of the famous Academy of Sura in Babylonia, Saadya reached the height of eminence in the Jewish world. But a conflict with the Babylonian exarch, David ben Zakkai, forced him to retire for four or five years to Bagdad, and it was there that he had the opportunity to write, in Arabic, his greatest work, the *Kitab al-Amanat wal-I'tikadat* (Book of Doctrines and Beliefs), which he finished around 937. In this book he achieved the beginning of that synthesis of reason and revelation which was to form the guiding line of Jewish religious thinking for the next thousand years. A few years later, in 942, Saadya died in Babylonia, after having been reconciled with the exarch and restored to the Gaonate.

THE text published below consists of excerpts from the Prolegomena to the *Kitab al-Amanat*, in which Saadya lays down the purpose and the method, with its axioms, that he was to follow in demonstrating the compatibility of rationalism and Judaism. These excerpts are taken from a volume of selections from the *Kitab al-Amanat* edited and translated from the Arabic by Alexander Altmann, and published in 1946 by the East and West Library, by whose permission we reprint the text below. A complete translation of Saadya's work was recently published by Yale University Press.—ED.

AFTER this brief opening in praise and eulogy of our Lord, I will begin this book . . . with an exposition of the reason why men, in their search for Truth, become involved in errors, and how these errors can be removed so that the object of their investigations may be fully attained; moreover, why some of these errors have such

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a powerful hold on some people that they affirm them as the truth, deluding themselves that they know something. . . .

Some there are who have arrived at the truth and rejoice in the knowledge that they possess it; of them the prophet says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and Thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart" (Jer. 15.16). Others have arrived at the truth, but doubt it; they fail to know it for a certainty and to hold on to it; of these the prophet says, "Though I write for him ever so many things of My law, they are accounted as a stranger's" (Hosea 8.12). Still others confidently affirm that which is false in the belief that it is true; they hold on to falsehood, and abandon that which is right; of them it is said, "Let him not trust in vanity, deceiving himself; for vanity shall be his recompense" (Job 15.31).

Others again base their conduct on a certain belief for a time, and then reject it on account of some defect they find in it; then they change over to another belief and renounce it in turn because of something in it which seems questionable to them; then they go over to yet another belief for a while, and drop it because of some point which, in their opinion, renders it invalid. These people are changing continually all their life. They resemble a person who desires to go to a town, but does not know the road that leads to it; he travels a parasang on one road and becomes perplexed, returns and travels a parasang on another road, becomes again perplexed and returns, and so a third and fourth time. Of such a man Scripture says, "The labor of fools wearieth everyone of them, he knoweth not how to go to the city" (Eccl. 10.15), that is to say because he knoweth not. . . .

ONE might ask: "How can it be reconciled with the wisdom of the Creator (be He exalted and glorified) that He allowed errors and doubts to arise in the minds of His creatures?" We may answer this question at once by saying that the very fact that they are created beings causes them to be subject to error and delusion. For according to the order of Creation they require for every work which they undertake a certain measure of time in which to complete it stage after stage. Cognition being one of their activities, it undoubtedly comes under the same rule.

In its initial stage, their knowledge proceeds from a complex, vague, and confused idea of things, but by their faculty of Reason they purify and clarify it in a continual process until, after a certain measure of time, their errors are removed, and a clear idea is formed without any admixture of doubt. And just as every productive art is carried out by successive operations and remains incomplete if those performing it desist from it prior to its completion—such as sowing, building, weaving, and the other kinds of productive work which can only be accomplished by the worker's persisting in it patiently until the end—so the work of acquiring knowledge demands that one should start from the beginning and proceed chapter after chapter until the final stage is reached.

AT the beginning there may be, for example, ten doubts; at the second stage they will be reduced to nine, at the third to eight, and if a man continues to reason and to reflect, his doubts will in this way be further reduced until, at the final stage, there will emerge in full clarity the one proposition which formed the object of his search, and which stands out clearly defined, with no error or doubt attached to it. . . . Now were he to abandon his speculation when he arrived at the fifth or fourth or any other stage, the doubts which attended the preceding stages of his reflection would be removed, but there would still remain with him the doubts attached to the remaining stages in front of him. If he retains in his mind the result of his speculation up to the point which he reached, he may hope to return to this point and complete the inquiry. If he fails to retain it, he will have to start his inquiry afresh.

For this reason many people have gone astray and spurned wisdom. . . . Let not therefore the fool in his impatience lay the blame for his own fault on the Creator (be He exalted and glorified) by saying that He implanted these doubts in him, whereas it is his own ignorance or impatience which threw him into confusion, as we have explained. Nor is it possible that any action of his can, by a single stroke, remove all doubt. For if it could, it would transcend

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the sphere of created beings, to which he belongs. Another person may not attach any blame for this fault of his to God, but desires God to impart to him the ability to know with a knowledge that is free from doubt. Such a one asks for nothing less than to be like God. . . .

It is now fitting that we should explain the nature of Belief. We affirm that this is an idea arising in the soul as to what an object of knowledge really is: when the idea is clarified by speculation, Reason comprehends it, accepts it, and makes it penetrate the soul and become absorbed into it; then man believes this idea which he has attained, and he preserves it in his soul for another time or other times, as is said, "Wise men lay up knowledge" (Prov. 10.14), and as is further said, "Receive, I pray thee, instructions from His mouth, and lay up His words in thy heart" (Job 22.22).

Belief is of two kinds, true or false. True belief means believing a thing to be as it really is, the large as large, the small as small, the black as black, the white as white, the existing as existing, the non-existing as non-existing. False belief means believing a thing to be the opposite of what it really is, the large as small, the small as large, the white as black, the black as white, the existing as non-existing and the non-existing as existing.

The wise man, who deserves praise, is the one who fixes his attention on the realities of things, and adapts his belief to them. Thanks to his wisdom he relies on that which can indeed be relied on and guards against that which must be guarded against. The fool, who is blameworthy, is the one who makes his belief the standard, and decrees that the realities of things must follow his belief. Thanks to his folly he relies on that which should be guarded against, and guards against that which can be relied on, as is said, "A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil, but the fool behaveth overbearingly, and is confident" (Prov. 14. 16).

In this conection I should like to refer to certain people who cause me astonishment. Though really servants they think they have no master, and they feel confident that what they reject is false and what they affirm is correct. These people are sunk in the depths of foolishness and stand on the brink of the abyss. If they are right, let the poor man believe that his boxes and baskets are full of money, and let him see what it will profit him. . . . The height of folly, however, is reached by those people who think that because they do not believe in Divine authority they are free from God's commandments and prohibitions, from His promise and warning, and all that these imply. Scripture describes such people as saying "Let us break His bonds asunder, and cast away His cords from us" (Ps. 2.3). . . . They will not escape what His wisdom had imposed on them, as is said, "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength; who hath hardened himself against Him and prospered?" (Job 9.4). . . .

It is desirable that we should now mention the sources of truth and certainty, which are the origin of all knowledge and the fountain of all cognition. . . . We affirm then that there exist three sources of knowledge: (1) The knowledge given by sense perception; (2) the knowledge given by Reason; (3) inferential knowledge. We proceed now to give an explanation of each of these Roots.

By the knowledge of sense perception we understand that which a man perceives by one of the five senses, i.e. sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. By the knowledge of Reason we understand that which is derived purely from the mind, such as the approval of truth and the disapproval of falsehood. By inferential knowledge we understand a proposition which a man cannot deny without being compelled to deny at the same time some proposition obtained from Reason or sense perception. Where there is no way of denying these propositions, the previous proposition must of necessity be accepted; e.g., we are compelled to admit that man possesses a soul, although we do not perceive it by our senses, so as not to deny its obvious functions. Similarly, we are compelled to admit that the soul is endowed with Reason, although we do not perceive it by our senses, so as not to deny its [Reason's] obvious function. . . .

We, the Congregation of the Believers in the Unity of God, accept the truth of all the three sources of knowledge, and we add a fourth source, which we derive from

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the three preceding ones, and which has become a Root of Knowledge for us, namely, the truth of reliable Tradition. For it is based on the knowledge of sense perception and the knowledge of Reason, as we shall explain in Chapter 3 of this book.

These four Roots of Knowledge having been specified, we have now to explain in which way we may rely on them for evidence of truth.

First with regard to the knowledge of sense perception, whenever an object makes an impression on our normal sense organ by coming into contact with it, we may safely believe without any doubt that it is in reality as we perceived it, provided we are sufficiently expert not to be misled by illusions, like the people who believe that the image which appears in the mirror is an image which has been actually created there. . . .

As to the knowledge of Reason, we hold that every conception formed in our mind (Reason) which is free from defects is undoubtedly true knowledge, provided we know how to reason, complete the act of reasoning, and guard against illusions and dreams. . . .

As to inferential knowledge, the position is this: if we perceive a certain object with our senses and accept it as actually existing, but are unable to believe firmly that this object exists unless we believe that some other things co-exist with it, then it is necessary for us to believe in the existence of all those things be they a few or many. For the sense perception concerned could not have come to us without them. There may be one such inferred object or there may be two, three, four, or more. Whatever the conclusion may be, it must be upheld because neither the sense perception nor any of these inferential notions can be denied.

An example of the inference of a single object is the following: if we see smoke without seeing the fire which produces the smoke, it is necessary for us to believe in the existence of the fire on account of the existence of the smoke because the one could not be accounted for without the other. . . . An example of more than one single inference is the case when we see food being absorbed into the stomach of an animal in solid form and re-emerge in the form of waste. If we do not believe in the performance of four different functions, our sense perception could not be accounted for. These functions are performed (1) by the power of attracting nourishment into the body; (2) the power of retaining the food until it is thoroughly softened; (3) the power of digestion and assimilation; and (4) the power of expelling from the body what has become waste. Since our sense perception can only be accounted for by the performance of these four functions, it is necessary to believe that they actually take place.

The character of inferential knowledge having been explained, it is necessary for us to draw attention to certain mistakes against which one must guard, for most of the controversies between men and most of their differences in methods of argument arise from these mistakes. . . .

In endeavouring to establish the truth of inferential knowledge we [must] be on guard against . . . five possible forms of mistakes, namely: (1) that it does not conflict with knowledge established by sense perception; (2) that it does not conflict with knowledge established by Reason; (3) that it should not conflict with some other truths; (4) that it should not be self-contradictory; still more that it should not (5) involve a difficulty more serious than the one intended to avoid.

The first and primary condition, however, is that we should carefully apply our experience to our interpretation of sense perceptions and of the dictates of Reason as described. In addition, we have to persevere in the work of rational inquiry until its final completion so that altogether seven conditions have to be fulfilled in order to bring out the clear truth. If, therefore, someone who is not a member of our people comes forward with certain arguments based on inferential knowledge we have to examine his statement in the light of the above seven conditions. If it stands their test and is proved correct when weighed in their balances, it is the clear truth which we, too, have to accept.

We shall employ similar rules in dealing with the reliable Tradition, that is to say the Books of the Prophets. But this is not the place to explain the conditions peculiar to them. . . .

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It may be objected: "How can we undertake to pursue knowledge by means of speculation and inquiry with the object of attaining mathematical certainty, seeing that our people reject this manner of speculation as leading to unbelief and the adoption of heretical views?" Our answer is that only the ignorant speak thus. Similarly one will find that the ignorant people in our town are of the opinion that every one who goes to India becomes rich. So, too, some of the ignorant people in our nation are said to think that the eclipse of the moon occurs whenever something resembling a dragon swallows the moon. Some of the ignorant people in Arabia are said to hold the opinion that unless a man's camel is slaughtered over his grave, he will have to appear on foot on Judgment Day. There exist many more ridiculous opinions like these.

ANOTHER objection is that the greatest of the Sages of Israel prohibited this, and particularly the speculation on the origin of Time and Space, when they declared, "Whosoever speculates on four things should better not have been created: on what is above and what is below, what is the beginning and what will be in the end." Our answer is this: it cannot be thought that the Sages should have wished to prohibit us from rational inquiry, seeing that our Creator has commanded us to engage in such inquiry in addition to accepting the reliable Tradition. Thus He said, "Know ye not? Hear ye not? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood the foundations of the earth?" (Isa. 40.21). The pious men said to each other, "Let us choose for us that which is right; let us know among ourselves what is good" (Job 34.4), and, indeed, the five men, namely Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zopher, and Elihu, had long discussions on this subject.

What, however, our Sages did try to prevent us from doing was to brush aside the prophetic Scriptures and to rely on our own personal judgments in our speculations on the origin of Space and Time. For one who speculates after this manner may sometimes find the truth and sometimes go astray; until he has found the truth, he will be without religion; and even if he finds the truth of religion and clings to it, he is never sure that he will not depart from it should doubts arise in his mind and weaken his belief. All of us agree that one who acts in this way is a sinner, even though he may be a genuine philosopher. But we, the Congregation of the Children of Israel, have a different way of investigation and speculation, and it is this which I want to mention and explain with the help of God.

THE reader of this book should know that we inquire and speculate in matters of our religion for two reasons: (1) in order that we may find out for ourselves what we know in the way of imparted knowledge from the Prophets of God; (2) in order that we may be able to refute those who attack us on matters connected with our religion. For our Lord (be He blessed and exalted) instructed us in everything which we require in the way of religion, through the intermediacy of the Prophets after having established for us the truth of prophecy by signs and miracles. He commanded us to believe these matters and to keep them. He also informed us that by speculation and inquiry we shall attain to certainty on every point in accordance with the Truth revealed through the words of His Messenger.

In this way we speculate and search in order that we may make our own what our Lord has taught us by way of instruction. There is, however, another objection which we have to consider. It may be asked: If the doctrines of religion can be discovered by rational inquiry and speculation, as God has told us, how can it be reconciled with His wisdom that He announced them to us by way of prophetic Revelation and verified them by proofs and signs of a visible character, and not by rational inquiry and speculation?

To this we will give a complete answer with the help of God. We say: God knew in His wisdom that the final propositions which result from the labor of speculation can only be attained in a certain measure of time. Had he, therefore, made us depend on speculation for religious knowledge, we should have existed without religion for some time until the work of speculation was completed and our labor had come to an end. Perhaps many of us would never have completed the work because of their inability and never have finished their labor because of their lack of patience; or doubts

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may have come upon them, and confused and bewildered their minds.

FROM all these troubles God (be He exalted and glorified) saved us quickly by sending us His Messenger, announcing through him the Tradition, and allowing us to see with our own eyes signs in support of it and proofs which cannot be assailed by doubts, and which we can find no ground for rejecting, as is said, "Ye yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from Heaven" (Ex. 20.22).

He spoke to His Messenger in our presence, and He based on this fact our obligation to believe him for ever, as He said, "That the people may hear when I speak with thee, and may also believe thee for ever" (Ex. 19.9). So we were immediately obliged to accept the teaching of religion with all that it implies since it was verified by the testimony of sense perception, and its acceptance is obligatory on the strength of the reliable Tradition which has been handed down to us as we shall explain. He commanded us to inquire patiently until the truth of Tradition was brought out by speculation, and not to depart from our religious position before its truth was verified, since we are obliged to believe in it on account of what we saw with our eyes and heard with our ears.

In the case of some of us it may take a very long time until our speculation is completed, but we shall be none the worse for that, and if another one is held up in his studies on account of some hindrance, he will nevertheless not remain without religion. Even women and children and people incapable of speculation will possess a complete religion and be aware of its truths, for all human beings are equal so far as the knowledge of the senses is concerned. Praise unto Him Whose wisdom guideth man! This is why we find that the Torah mentions in many passages children and women in addition to the men when speaking of signs and miracles.

To make the matter clearer, let us suppose that someone who possesses one thousand dinar distributes this money in the following way:

5 persons	receive each	20 2/5	dinar—102
6 persons	receive each	16 2/3	dinar—100
7 persons	receive each	14 2/7	dinar—100
8 persons	receive each	12 3/8	dinar— 99
9 persons	receive each	11	dinar— 99
			500

He wishes to show his friends without delay how much of the money is left in his hands. He therefore tells them that the balance left amounts to five hundred dinar and proves it by weighing the gold that is left in his hands. After he has weighed it in their presence, and the amount of five hundred dinar has been established, his friends are obliged to believe what he told them. They are now at leisure to arrive at the same knowledge by a different method, namely, by working it out arithmetically, each according to his capacity and understanding, provided no hindrance arises through adverse conditions. Another illustration: One may diagnose rapidly a certain malady on the evidence of some obvious symptom long before another reaches the same conclusion after an exhaustive examination.

It is desirable that we should further believe that even prior to the existence of the children of Israel God imparted our religion to humanity by means of prophecy, wondrous signs, miracles, and manifestations. Those who were present were convinced by what they had perceived with their own eyes; those who received a tradition in regard to it were convinced by what they had perceived with their own ears, as the Torah says, with reference to some of them, "For I have known him (Abraham), to the end that he may command his children" (Gen. 18.19).

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ON THE HORIZON

The Decent German: Film Portrait

SIEGFRIED KRACAUER

WITHIN the last few month, several German postwar films have come to us from the Soviet zone of occupation. One of these, *Marriage in the Shadows,* though not precisely a work of art, at least represents a serious attempt at self-scrutiny. It is, moreover, a film essentially German in technique and outlook; though it was made under Russian auspices, there is no significant evidence of Russian influence to be found in it. It offers, therefore, certain indications of the present state of the German mentality.

This is all the more useful because current reports from Germany, concerned with day-to-day politics rather than deeper currents, do not give a coherent picture of what is going on in the minds of the Germans. On the one hand, they very optimistically speak of a turn to the better, with democratic thought gaining strength; on the other, they record facts which give about the reverse impression;—all too often, apparently, objective estimates are watered down by wishful thinking and moral preachment.

To be sure, the psychological meaning of a film is not always to be found on its surface. Hollywood films, for instance, have been criticized for misleading people abroad into believing that America is a paradise for gangsters, a country where money means everything and acts of unbridled violence alternate with scenes effusively sentimental. These films, it has been remarked, distort American life. No doubt they do, if they are taken at face value. Yet there is a sense in which Hollywood films—the films of all nations, for that matter—reflect a deeper reality: often they reveal less obvious motivations and behavior patterns which in one way or another do correspond to actually existing mass tendencies. In an earlier article in COMMENTARY ("Hollywood's Terror Films," August 1946), the writer tried to show that those screen pageants of horror and sadism which flourished immediately after the war had a distinct bearing on the mental climate of the time. Similarly, it is not difficult, at least in retrospect, to realize that there was a close relation between such a film as Capra's *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and the era of the New Deal. Or, to take a more recent example, the Italian film *Paisan,* a blend of political inertia and stirring humanity, clearly reveals its origin in the psychological climate of a nation that has seen many ideas come and go, invariably entailing war and misery, and is now suspicious of all ideas and all politics.

COVERING the period from 1933 to 1943, *Marriage in the Shadows* tells the story, said to be based on real-life events, of a popular Berlin actor and his Jewish wife, herself a prominent actress. The story begins with her enforced retreat from the stage, drags on in an atmosphere of gloom and ever-growing despair, and ends with the actor poisoning himself and his wife to spare her the horrors of imminent deportation. But this is only the nucleus of a plot which clearly aims at driving home the impact of Nazi

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ON THE HORIZON, devoted to comment on cultural and social events and trends, presents this month an analysis by Siegfried Kracauer of a postwar German film, *Marriage in the Shadows,* which reveals disturbing facts about the present state of the German mind; and a report by HEINZ POLITZER on the interaction of American, East European, and Israeli culture in New York's Yiddish Theater. Dr. Kracauer is the author of *From Caligari to Hitler,* a psychological history of the German cinema. Dr. Politzer, now teaching at Bryn Mawr, has been a frequent contributor to these pages; his article is translated by F. C. Golffing.

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anti-Semitism on all those liberal-minded Gentiles and Jews who in happier days unhesitatingly mingled with each other. *Marriage in the Shadows* is a chronicle of the German middle class under Hitler.

We seem to learn only what we never doubted—that decency did not die out when the Nazis took over. Wieland, the actor, refuses indignantly to divorce his Elisabeth; and neither of them would dream of deserting their Jewish friend Kurt, who chooses to emigrate after the Reichstag fire but reappears in Berlin ten years later, a fugitive from a concentration camp. Similarly, the old Jewish doctor Silbermann is not entirely wrong in relying on the loyalty of his "Aryan" patients: some of them, at least, are prepared to risk their lives to shelter him as the terror reaches its peak. Silbermann is a sort of Biblical figure, a second Nathan the Wise. What an abrupt change—slightly embarrassing for being so abrupt—from the Nazi-contrived "Jew Suess" to this paragon of mellow sweetness!

Nor did we ever doubt that many were less dependable. The film offers a variety of samples, ranging from meek compliance to spiteful malignity. The publisher Dr. Blohm, Elisabeth's fiancé in pre-Hitler days, is particularly interesting because he illustrates the typical self-justifications of the weak social climber. No sooner does Hitler win out than the handsome Dr. Blohm solves the conflict between love and career by exchanging his place in Elisabeth's heart for a job in the propaganda ministry and posing before her and himself as an idealist. Beneath his pretenses to culture and goodness there extends a bottomless swamp. As one of Goebbels' henchmen he first protects Elisabeth from the Gestapo to soothe his conscience and eventually betrays her to save his skin. The swamp engulfs him.

We knew all this. Yet in confirming it *Marriage in the Shadows* adds a touch of first-hand experience and valuable detail. The pictorial account of the anti-Jewish mob riots in 1938 reconstructs that organized fury with convincing accuracy; and many a conversation about topical issues sounds like a transcript from minutes. The film's specific merit is its honesty, which sometimes produces effects far more impressive than the glamor of Hollywood: a gay pastoral scene sandwiched between two episodes of anguish illuminates the nightmarish character of a universe in which sublime art neighbors on crude terror; and I do not recall any suicide on the screen that can match the film's concluding sequence with its drawn-out silences and its finality.

THERE the matter might rest, were it not for the attitudes one senses behind the film—attitudes that should alarm those concerned with German "re-education."

Steeped in purely personal moral distinctions, *Marriage in the Shadows* condemns the "bad" Germans who surrendered to Hitler, while praising the "good" ones who did not. No doubt these latter are deserving of praise; yet they talk and act in a way which, to say the least, has a strangely pathetic quality. What is wrong with them? Their whole conduct illustrates the simple truth that decency comes into its own only if it is acted out on the political scene as well as in private life. And it cannot fully be acted out unless the decent people are guided by concepts which make them grasp the significance of politics, the close interrelation of private and public morals.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the political immaturity of *Marriage in the Shadows*. By applying the yardstick of individual ethics indiscriminately to all human affairs, the film precludes any understanding of Hitler's hold on the mass mind. The Nazis—SS-men, Gestapo agents, top officials, and the like—are represented simply as conquerors who, for reasons left unexplained, have managed to seize control, attracting the weak, the mean, and the vicious. This is how they appear to Elisabeth and her friends, and the treatment of them on the screen constantly deepens the impression that they are an alien race unconnected with the rest of the people—as if the Germans, like the French, were the victims of an invasion. Need it be said that such an approach is inadequate? Before 1933 as well as later, many middle-class Germans, upset by the vast unemployment, the irreconcilable antagonism of Left and Right, and the sterility of a system which the Nazis had done so much to undermine, in all sincerity saw Hitler as a savior; the very idea of an omnipotent Fuehrer appealed to their traditional authoritarian leanings. *Hitler came from within.* And it is absurd to pass off the

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bulk of his followers among the educated as simple opportunists or hypocrites.

In *Marriage in the Shadows* decency unfolds at the expense of adult political judgment. This shows most glaringly in the film-makers' tendency to deprecate Jewish emigration. To be sure, Kurt, more sensitive than the others, leaves Berlin for Vienna; and Elisabeth might have left also, had not emotion overcome her reason. But the overwhelming sympathies lie with those who bear the brunt at home. Instead of sending Elisabeth away to safety, her husband implores her to stay with him in Germany and in general looks down upon emigrants. "Maybe it won't be so bad," says Dr. Silbermann in the early days of the regime, "but should things turn worse, I would think even less of going abroad." And as if to emphasize his courage, two Jews shown in his waiting room absorbed in discussing foreign visas are characterized as pitiable, inferior creatures.

The film thus tends to cast Jewish emigrants almost in the role of deserters. But to what do they owe allegiance? And why does Elisabeth not try to argue the situation out with her husband? For all their personal integrity, the Jewish characters act out of an emotional idealism much cultivated in Germany—an idealism which holds reason in contempt and prides itself on never asking questions. In this film, its most striking result is a double suicide of no consequence; as if to emphasize the essentially unrealistic character of the suicide, it is made to parallel the final scene of a stage-play that Hans and Elisabeth are shown acting when the film opens—thus supplying a framework more significant than the film-makers may have intended.

Products of a thoroughgoing effort at assimilation, the good Jews of the film resemble the good Germans in combining high sentiments with poor judgment. They take their plight for granted; the existence of other possibilities and another world—Palestine, for example—seems unknown to them.

Jews or Gentiles, these decent middle-class Germans are incapable even of an attempt to translate their decency into action. They repeatedly accuse themselves, it is true, of not having entered the arena as fighters; but these rare bits of insight turn out to be merely rhetorical protestations leading nowhere. For the rest, *Marriage in the Shadows* strictly avoids facing up to the facts. The Jewish characters die by their own hands or succeed in escaping; their fear of deportation is never borne out by a scene evoking the ultimate consequence of deportation. Nor does the film mention political activities against the Nazis. It remains unclear, for instance, whether the people who shelter Silbermann are underground fighters or not. Silbermann himself, being of a saintly nature, is politically a blank. The same holds true of Elisabeth and the others, with perhaps the one exception of Kurt, who at least is dimly aware of the impact of Hitlerism.

Politics for these people is nothing but a hateful intrusion into their emotional and cultural privacy. One episode intimates that Wieland, in the interest of his career as an actor, might readily make his peace with the Nazis were it not for his *personal* moral obligation to Elisabeth. Elisabeth herself communes with the elements at a North Sea beach while the clouds gather over Berlin, and in a despondent mood seeks comfort in Goethe's letters. She and her friends are so exclusively concerned with their private lives that they see public life as something that remains outside their reach; they are thus completely at a loss when political or social events lay claim to their common sense rather than their familiarity with Goethe. They know only that they *should* do something about the situation; but when it comes to it they are stunned into passivity.

The film fails to show any real awareness of these shortcomings. Here a side-glance at *Paisan* is rewarding. The monks in the monastery episode of *Paisan* match Silbermann in both saintliness and ignorance; but precisely because of these qualities they are portrayed with a subtle irony which quietly points up the limitations of their outlook. No such irony is used in the presentation of Silbermann, Elisabeth, and Wieland. Occasionally, it is true, these characters indulge in an optimism which is regularly discredited by the facts; yet even this emphasis on their self-deception is handled in such a way that it becomes not a criticism of their political ineptitude but only another

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means of arousing compassion for their tragic helplessness.

If *Marriage in the Shadows* reflects an actually existing state of mind, as I believe it does, then the unmodulated sympathy with which it surrounds its "good" characters would indicate that German middle-class mentality has not really changed. Through its one-sided emphasis on issues of personal morality, this film brings the problem of German re-education into sharp focus. For that problem does not bear on individual ethics, as many still incline to believe; rather, it bears on certain basic concepts which, common to "bad" Germans and "good" Germans alike, are responsible for their political inhibitions. What is wrong with the majority of Germans is the way they conceive of authority, of the role of reason, of the interrelation between culture and civilization. Any effective mobilization of German decency must depend on a change in habits of thought that are centuries old.

Our correspondents in Germany report an ever-increasing rehabilitation of former Nazis and a mounting wave of anti-Semitism. One fears that the decent Germans of today may again let the evil grow without penetrating and resisting it, and may again be caught in the maelstrom with nothing left intact but their precious decency. The suicide that ends this film is the ultimate response of which a purely personal morality is capable.

Starring Schwartz and Skulnik

HEINZ POLITZER

IT IS characteristic of the paradoxical situation in which present-day Jewish culture finds itself that the play with which Maurice Schwartz opened the season of his Yiddish Art Theatre in New York attempted what the Hebrew state theater, Habimah, has so far failed to do. Habimah's recent visit to New York showed to what extent the style and repertory of this troupe were still dominated and limited by the past, and how strong the connection still was between the official Palestinian enterprise and the Diaspora which had suffered political defeat; also how sentimentality and a certain macabre nationalism marred the artistic dynamics of this once-progressive ensemble.* Schwartz, on the other hand, tried to give us scenes from the every-day life of Palestine in 1948; *The Voice of Israel* is a Yiddish play about contemporary Hebrew actuality. Habimah, to be sure, has several times tried its hand at Hebrew *Zeitstücke,* but as their repertory in New York indicated, they themselves did not think these attempts fit for export.

The author, Elias Gilner, moves in the tradition of the Yiddish popular drama on which the repertory of the Hebrew stage, too, must draw, unless it has recourse to great plays of world literature. Gilner's fictive settlement, Miklat Yam, is actually closer to an East European small town than to a Palestinian kibbutz. The problems of the characters are not the tragic ones of the European refugees before and after their arrival in Palestine but rather those of popular melodrama around the turn of the century. The heroism of the settlers of Miklat Yam is not the Golem-like stoniness of the DP's as they travel over the thousand roads of Europe into Palestine, or the cold, razor-sharp determination of those men who were able to survive concentration camps and underground warfare only because they had assimilated themselves to the terror: it is the liberal bravado of the European radical of 1848, a false pathos turned commonplace, antiquated melodrama.

The story (the setting is Palestine during the six months just past) is loosely held together by a sentimental love tale: Zamira loves Gavriel; Gavriel has lost a hand fighting for the British at El-Alamein, and his heart has been so greatly weakened that during the proclamation of the state and the obligatory *hora* dance he falls dead from joy. His brother Yosef courts Zamira, who accepts him before the final curtain—partly because the dead man appears to her in a dream and supports the suit of the living, and partly because she feels the need for an "inner *aliyah*"—a high birth-rate in Israel.

QUITE apart from the preponderance of the maudlin love story, *The Voice of Israel* presents almost a complete inventory of the popular Yiddish drama; the conventional pageant at the beginning, dealing in this

*See my article "Habimah in New York," COMMENTARY, July 1948.

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case with the oppressors of the nation from Pharaoh through Torquemada to Ernest Bevin; the songs; the humor; the *shmaltz;* the fool or madman who, strangely enough, has become a stock figure in the Eastern Jewish popular drama and who, next to the lovers, wins the loudest applause: this time it is Malka, who comes from occupied Poland and has been driven out of her wits by terror. Other stock figures of the Yiddish theater superimposed upon Palestinian reality are: the pilgrim to Palestine, Reb Shmuel, who prepares to leave the besieged Miklat Yam and go on a pilgrimage to war-torn Jerusalem; the Polish swashbuckler and philanderer, Captain Galski (actually, during the last war and for a long time after, Polish troops under General Anders were garrisoned in Palestine, and the British used individual Polish soldiers and officers for espionage); the magnanimous gentleman, the English Major Henderson, who supports Zionism in its hour of greatest need and resigns his commission because he can no longer reconcile his convictions with his government's foreign policy. For this puppet, too, there were real archetypes in the past few years; I know of a high British civil servant and poet who, after Bevin's first Palestine proclamation, gave up his office in protest. But the black-and-white caricatures of Schwartz's theater obscure the moral meaning of such a decision, which symbolizes the revolt of the individual against uniformed power—even if this power fought against Hitler.

Politically, the author's hatred is centered on Bevin and "Wall Street." There is no hint of the tragic split that might result from divided political commitments in a democracy; full responsibility for the policy of the Western powers toward Palestine is laid simply at the door of British imperialism and American oil interests. This simplification represents a lost opportunity: the American Jew's hovering between love of his country and a half-religious enthusiasm for the new state furnishes a dramatic challenge that, both for topicality and effectiveness, puts these theatrical cartoons in the shade.

The Voice of Israel shows greater courage in its treatment of the Arab question. The plot includes two Arabs who side with their Jewish neighbors of Miklat Yam in the interest of a final reconciliation between the two nations. But our patriotic author ignores the question of how far this reconciliation is based on a true balancing of interests.

IN THE play, Nathan Ometz came to Palestine from the United States; an exemplary member of the Mapai, he has given his textile factory in Paterson, New Jersey, to his workers; two of his sons were killed in the disturbances of 1936 to 1939, and on the stage he covers the corpse of Gavriel, his third son, with the flag of the new state.

Nathan Ometz is played by Maurice Schwartz, a popular actor with the pathos and the sovereign air of a great trouper, a heroic father if there ever was one, the "Nathan the Wise" of the contemporary Yiddish theater. He plays with a naturalness born of routine, in the old style that goes back to Adolf von Sonnenthal, the Jewish father-image of the Vienna Burgtheater. His gestures great and small have the same seeming casualness, his voice the same range, his dramatic silences the same nobility. But we feel something else: a fire that far exceeds stage pathos, a rebellion born of grief over the universal fate, the alienation of humane man in a degenerate time. He is better when, beside his son's body, he communicates a true emotion, and plays almost up to the intensity of Job, than when he pleads for "illicit traffic"—the smuggling of illegal immigrants into Palestine—and serves up journalism.

SCHWARTZ'S *The Voice of Israel* is the grafting of Israel's struggle upon the Yiddish popular drama of yesteryear. All the emotions aroused in the audience by the proclamation of the state are likewise brought into play. A few steps lower down on Second Avenue, the Broadway of the Lower East Side, Menasha Skulnik offers a study in Jewish adjustment to the American way of life.

His *What a Guy* is a musical, with the dizzy tempo, the display of costumes and scenery, the exotic décor, the clichés, the masked sexuality that belong to the genre. It is not a translation of the revue into Yiddish, but rather an attempt to go it one better in a half-Yiddish, half-American jargon. Maurice Schwartz expresses the nostalgia for Palestine of disturbed Jewry in moving, but superannuated terms; he works, half-consciously, half-unconsciously, with the religious sub-stratum of this nostalgia, which is

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very much alive in a community that has not yet recovered from the Hitler trauma and has received a new, though positive shock, in the pseudo-messianic charisma of the state. In Skulnik's musical the same flustered Jewry has settled down in America; it feels quite at home; it glorifies the Garment Center and sings a paean in praise of Brooklyn. The reference to Palestine as "the perfect place for a honeymoon," the picture of Herzl, the flag, the inevitable pageant, with the Jewish wanderer and the Haganah soldier, exploit almost obscenely the psychological situation in which the audience finds itself. But as we know, commercial exploitation of the unconscious elements in the psychological make-up of the spectator shrinks from nothing. Portions of the Sabbath liturgy appear as song, garbled, in senseless, breathless repitition: Jehuda Halevi as jazz-singer.

It is true that this ensemble could not have entered the lists with its richer and more resourceful American rivals had it not received some of its momentum from its European past. It would not be more American than the American musicals, were it not less American than they. (This paradox lies at the root of the assimilative process generally.) The show opens with a tailor's dance, a choreographic achievement of the first rank, plainly derived from the choreographic tradition of the old Moscow Yiddish Theater. The jazz numbers, composed by Abe Ellstein, show a pronounced Slavic influence. And then there is Menasha Skulnik.

Skulnik is a sophisticated shlemiel, closer to the great tragicomic Fritz Grünbaum, who was killed by the Nazis, than to Charlie Chaplin. He represents the victory of wit over every imaginable misfortune, a wit that acknowledges no social barriers, that denies geography and history alike, that is everywhere and nowhere; next to Hasidism (with which it has ties), it is the most original achievement of East European Jewry. By raising or lowering his shoulders Skulnik overcomes matter before he even comes in contact with it; he eliminates the force of gravity by the gloss he makes upon it. He himself is placed obliquely in space, but his wit makes the space in which he moves appear distorted and askew, thus restoring true perspective and a kind of harmony. He is short and appears misshapen. But his smile, half that of a sage, half that of a faun, and entirely that of the *Royte Pomeranzen*, makes the well-formed feel ashamed of their trimness. He has the aggressiveness of the underdog and the magnanimity of one who believes that in the end the last shall be first. He is utterly unassimilated and utterly unassimilable: an individual.

SCHWARTZ and Skulnik represent Yiddish popular drama in America. Their art has its soil, the soil of tradition as well as of a clear-cut community life.

Their contribution to the totality of Jewish civilization in our time is wholly passive; it does not go beyond the contribution which the group they represent makes by its mere existence. They are content only to keep alive a tradition from which they draw their effects. Yet even such a passive contribution is invaluable, because one day the Jewish communities of the Western countries may feel called upon to utilize this tradition.

The past twenty-five years have seen the increasingly rapid emancipation of Palestine from the culture of the rest of the world. And there are those who expect the new state of Israel to become an entirely original source of cultural creativity, revivifying the "decadent" Diaspora. Will the new state attempt to impose its cultural ideals upon Jews at large? And will this in turn, as a necessary reaction, lead to a revival of Yiddish and all it stands for among non-Palestinian Jews? Or is a genuine exchange of cultures to be expected? It is still too early to answer these questions—but surely the time has come to ask them.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

COMIC BOOKS AND OTHER HORRORS

Prep School for Totalitarian Society?

NORBERT MUHLEN

CRIME is entertainment, and murder a parlor game," Viscount Samuel recently said of our times in an address before the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Judging by present-day books, radio, movies, and comics, it seems "as if we were all engaged in a slightly hysterical parlor-game, the object of which is to scare the living daylight out of the assembled company," says J. Donald Adams, chronicler of literary tides in the New York *Times Book Review*.

Complaints of this sort are probably as old as art and entertainment themselves; what is undeniably new is the sheer expansion in the mass of entertainment by murder and violence that the last decade has produced. Since the entertainment industry aims to deliver to its market exactly what the consumers want, what they are willing to pay for, and what will win in the competition with other types of entertainment goods, does this quantitative increase in murder, crime, and agony as favorite contents of mass entertainment reflect a new desire of the people for descriptions of aggression, destruction, and death? The entertainment industry says yes, and cites fairly reliable and continuous scientific tests which have ascertained this mass preference; and it is increasingly engaged in satisfying this blood-and-guts taste by all the technological means at its disposal. Those given to alarm have two problems to concern themselves with—what ominous factors does this new trend signify and portend as to the character of the public mind today, and what further effect may this endless tidal wave of terror entertainment have on our national life?

WHEN, shortly before the Second World War, mass distribution of low-cost books was finally achieved, detective and mystery novels became the basic staple of the new book-reading public. At least one-half of the twenty-five cent books produced today are devoted to the elaborately concocted means by which human beings can trap and kill each other. The same preoccupation has in recent years come more and more to the fore in the movies. In the late 30's the airwaves began to resound with manhunts and murders, and in the following years half-hour crime programs turned out to be the favorite radio entertainment. In the summer of 1948, for instance, sponsors bought more time for "suspense and mystery" than for any other type of program. A somewhat more restrained juvenile edition of the crime stories monopolizes the airwaves in the hour before 6 PM, with violence slightly watered down *ad usum delphini*.

NORBERT MUHLEN here attempts to turn available social-scientific light on a continuously perplexing problem for parents and educators: what is the effect of the prevailing terror movies, radio programs, and comic books on the minds of the children who consume them in such enormous quantities? Dr. Muhlen has previously discussed in these pages (March 1947) the political role of radio ("Radio: Political Threat or Promise?"). He was formerly editor of the *Radio Audience*, a magazine dealing with popular reactions to radio. Dr. Muhlen is now New York correspondent of *Der Monat*, a new monthly publication sponsored by American authorities in Germany. He has written *Schacht: Hitler's Magician* (New York, 1939) and *Starving Them to Death* (London, 1939), and is a contributor to the *New Leader*, *America*, and other periodicals.

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But the newest, widest-circulated, least inhibited, and least understood carrier of horror and destruction is the comic book. Thoroughly different from the older, much-censored, and more refined newspaper comic strips, approximately two-thirds of the comic books are devoted to the dehumanized, concentrated, and repetitious showing of death and destruction, whether against the highly realistic background of the "crime and police comics," or the supernatural level of the Superman-type comics, or in the fantasy world of the *Jungle Comics*. (The rest of the comic books contain romance, humor, animal stories, and educational subjects—there exists even *Bible Comics*.)

Their name to the contrary notwithstanding, there is nothing comical inside their covers. "Penny dreadfuls," as they are called in England, seems a better name, although American comics imported into England are recognized as a class apart, and given a name of their own, "Yank Mags." "There is a great difference in tone between even the most bloodthirsty English paper [comic book] and the threepenny Yank Mag," George Orwell, the English essayist, writes. "In the Yank Mags you get real blood-lust, really gory descriptions of the all-in, jump-on-the-testicles style of fighting, written in a jargon that has been perfected by people who brood endlessly on violence. A paper like *Fight Stories*, for instance, would have very little appeal except to sadists and masochists." (*Fight Stories* is one of America's most popular comic books.)

The comic books date back to the middle 30's, when they escaped the apron strings of newspapers and advertisers, and won the right to indulge without inhibitions in concentrated violence. In the last three pre-war years, when the mass appeal of the "action comics" really set in, they sold ten million copies a month. In 1947, the rate was sixty million copies a month. That means that for every book of any kind published in this country, two comic books were published simultaneously. (In the period from 1943 to 1945, for instance, this country produced slightly more than one billion comic books, and 428,000,000 other books, 237,000,000 of which were textbooks and 43,000,000 religious books.) However, there are three to four readers to every comic book, considerably above the rate for other books.

READING of comic books is by no means restricted to children. An impressive segment of the adult population of America reads comic books regularly, that is, six per month or more.* Of the men in army training camps in the last war, 44 per cent read comic books regularly, an additional 13 per cent read them occasionally.

In the army post exchanges they outsold the total of the three most popular national magazines ten to one. The army was only a little more addicted to comic books than the rest of the population: 41 per cent of the civilian male adult population, and 28 per cent of the female adult population, are regular comic book readers.

These adult comic book readers are neither illiterates nor morons. One study finds that 25 per cent of the adult elementary school graduates, 27 per cent of the adult high school graduates, and even 16 per cent of the adult college graduates (and 12 per cent of the nation's schoolteachers) are regular comic book readers.

In the age group from 18 to 34 years, almost three times as many people read the comic books as do people of older age.† Perhaps—for biological or other reasons—the interest in, and need for, the entertainment of violence and aggression decreases with advancing age. But it is not unlikely that the young adult comic book readers simply represent the first grown-up generation of children that were brought up on, conditioned by, and habitually addicted to this kind of reading. If this is so, the habit will be still more general among the next adult generation, for the children of today are *en masse* readers of the comic books.

Between six and eleven years of age, 95 per cent of the boys and 91 per cent of the girls throughout the nation, with few regional differences, read an average of 15 comic books per month. In the age group between twelve and eighteen, more than 8 out of 10 children still

*Figures are from surveys conducted by the Market Research Corporation of America, by Paul H. Stewart and Associates (quoted in *The Comics*, by Coulton Waugh, New York, 1947), and by other commercial market and media research organizations.

†According to the most recent study (*Tide*, September 24, 1948), of a representative cross-section of the population of Dayton, Ohio, 43 per cent of the men and 51 per cent of the women between 21 and 30 regularly read comic books, while in the age groups upwards from 31 years only 35 per cent of the men and 26 per cent of the women read them.

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read at least a dozen every month, with the boys again slightly leading the girls.

Children of all intelligence levels read comic books. In a survey of 2,500 grade-school children in Illinois, Paul Witty reported that "the 10 per cent of the pupils who read comics most in one school were compared with the 10 per cent who read them least. The average IQ was in the interval 105 to 110," that is, both groups were of the same intelligence level. (*Journal of Experimental Education*, 1941.) Alice P. Sterner, after a study of 372 high school children in New Jersey, stated that there was no relation between these children's interests in radio, comic books, and motion pictures, and their intelligence (*Publications of Teachers College*, Columbia University, 1948).

THUS most children will consume more than a dozen comic books per month, go to the movies four to eight times a month, and listen to radio dramas practically every afternoon and evening for several hours. Whether they look at pictures, listen to words and sounds, or read the printed word—and they do all of this together some of the time—they perceive the same world-view. The children take their daily lethal dose of crime and cruelty, torture and terror as regularly as their daily vitamin-enriched breakfast food. "Comes a pause in the day's occupation that is known as the Children's Hour. . . ."

In contrast to the official pattern of the American Dream, and its world of peace and progress in which people get along with each other, the American daydream (and nightmare) of the media of mass entertainment is acted out in a world in which human relations are opened and settled by daggers, whips, tommyguns, or atomic exterminators. In psychoanalytic terms, the entertainment of a large part of the nation's adults, and of the overwhelming majority of its youth, is directed toward *mortido* rather than *libido*: toward destruction rather than procreation, toward hate rather than love, toward aggression rather than understanding, toward death rather than life. Its common denominator is violence—all the forms, techniques, systems, and possibilities of violence. And almost never is there any concern with the *reasons* for which people act in violence—for this there is obviously little time and space in the ninety minutes of a movie, the thirty minutes of a radio play, the sixty cartoons of a comic book story.

The guardians of the public weal have not let all this go unprotested; the entertainment industries have had to contend with aggrieved pressure groups as they became increasingly popular.

The pattern was established when in the early 20's a storm of criticism from church organizations induced the motion picture industry to set up an office for the control of offensive violence (and sex). Mr. Will H. Hays, former Postmaster General in the Harding Administration, the arbiter of morality and taste on the screen, proclaimed: "This industry must have toward that sacred thing, the mind of a child, toward that clean virgin thing, that unmarked slate, the same responsibility, the same care about the impressions made upon it, that the best clergyman, or the best inspired teacher of youth would have." Mr. Hays succeeded at least in giving such respectable appearances to horror as to make it acceptable to the reformers, while leaving it profitable enough for the producers bound on satisfying the demand of the market. The close-up of the victim's slow strangulation, for instance, was banned from the screen and replaced by the dim shadow of strangling hands, or the movement of a rope, or only a blood-curdling moan.

The pattern of self-censorship was later repeated by the broadcasting industry when, in the late 30's, the industry authored and applied a code of rules which either repressed or refined the most direct sound and fury of violence. Vigilant network vice-presidents policed the scripts for swearwords and too articulate terror. Now in the case of the comic books, the process of enforcing more respectable and acceptable appearances has been started. In 1947, an Association of Comics Magazine Publishers was founded; in the fall of 1948, it published a self-regulatory program directed at deleting raw violence and raw sex from the industry's output. A lawyer connected with the industry, who holds a public-school office, presides over a board of experts which will award a "seal of approval" to the comic books meeting its standards. It may be assumed that the success of the Hays Office, in the form of a sly camouflage of the image of violence, will in due time be repeated in the comic book world.

WITH discussion raging as to the possible effects of violence as entertainment, particularly on children, it was only natural that the scientists would be called in—by those

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attacking, and those defending, the new developments—to offer their expert advice. As specialists on the influences playing on human behavior, they could presumably best gauge the effects of the communication of horror and violence. Most discussions in the past few years have centered around the comic books, as the most prominent, least reluctant, most intriguing vehicle of violence directed toward children. And the Battle of the Comic Books has developed to some degree into a civil war among psychoanalysts, since the leading accusers as well as defenders are psychiatrists trained in and using the methods and insights of Freud's dynamic psychology. (Many of the psychiatrists, educators, and child psychologists who have been most active in public and scientific defense of the comic books are retained by comic-book publishers as advisers.) To be sure, clinical and social observation on the subject is deplorably scarce, theoretical interpretations, based on general assumptions and a restricted, non-representative number of cases, are the rule, while the contradicting conclusions are delivered with a certainty based on conviction rather than verifiable truth.

The crucial question around which the controversy turns is: Do these media present to the mind of the child fantasy or fact, dreams or reality, play or lesson?

The accusers claim that the child can be so deeply impressed by crime and horror stories without end that it accepts their world as the real world to which it has to adjust itself. The symbol of this theory is the little boy who got a Superman cape on his birthday, wrapped it around himself, and sprang out of the window of his apartment house. The defenders, on the other hand, assert that the child, finding it necessary to suppress his violent and aggressive drives under the impact of adults and education, can do this in a more healthy way by finding an outlet for them through mentally participating in the violence-play and aggression-fantasies of his favorite entertainment media. According to their reasoning, comic books and other horror media are the child's aspirin and penicillin which help him to overcome the pains arising from the task of growing up into a peaceful adult world, while according to the first theory, they are the opium of the nursery, leading the individual child spellbound by their evil charms straight onto the road to crime.

There is some evidence that mass media have direct effects on the public mind and behavior, most obviously in the areas of fads and fashions. The publishers of the newspaper funny strips themselves boast that the example of Popeye the Sailor popularized spinach-eating among America's children, that in the wake of "Bringing Up Father" corned-beef and cabbage became a favorite dish of the nation, that Penny made the teen-agers wear hats, and that the upswept hairdo and bare-midriff dress were invented and publicized by another funny strip heroine. But the more serious charge that they also stimulate and incite socially disapproved actions—as well as approved or ethically neutral actions—is less convincing.

In August 1948, newspapers reported from New Albany, Indiana, that three boys, aged six, eight, and nine, had tortured a playmate of seven "merely to re-enact a comic book plot." A few months later, the press publicized the suicide of a twelve-year-old boy in Niagara, Wisconsin, allegedly inspired by Wild West comics; and the poisoning of a fifty-year-old woman in Los Angeles by a fourteen-year-old boy who got the idea and the poison recipe from another comic book. Many saw this as proof for the theory that, in the words of Frederic Wertham, comic books suggest "criminal or sexually abnormal ideas" to children and make them act out these ideas (New York *Times*, September 4, 1948). Dr. Wertham, a leading psychiatrist who works with the two largest mental hygiene clinics of New York City, has repeated his point in popular and scientific publications, and has marshalled as proof for the crime-inducing quality of the comic books seven cases of juvenile delinquents who were also ardent comic-book readers.

Using the same kind of argument, L. J. G. Proal, a French criminologist and one of the leading authorities of his day, "proved" fifty years ago, in his work on *Le crime et le suicide passionnels*, with a few cases and newspaper clippings, that crimes had been committed under the direct influence and in imitation of novels by Dostoevsky, Paul Bourget, and other novelists whom the criminals admitted to have read. M. Proal went further back in history and discovered that Goethe, Shakespeare, Ovid, and other writers were directly responsible for murders and suicides committed by their readers; that, in other words, crime in life is only a slavish imitation of crime in art. The conclusion, reluctantly suggested by Proal as to the literature of crime in gen-

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eral, and openly called for by Wertham as to the comic books, is to ban these abettors of crime.

But since more than nine out of ten American children read comic books, while considerably less than one out of one thousand commits a crime after the comic book description, the argument of Wertham, like that of Proal, hardly permits a general conclusion; neither Proal's nor Wertham's cases are clearly symptomatic or typical for the behavior of readers of Goethe and Dostoevsky on the one hand, or the comic books on the other.

In an earlier work, Dr. Wertham himself rejected this simplistic theory of causation: "It seems to me just as inexact," he wrote, "to say fiction has no influence at all on people's actions as to blame crime on such fiction. Apparently anti-social impulses do not originate in that way. But when they once exist, added impetus may be given them by way of identification with a fictional scene." (*Dark Legend, A Study in Murder*, 1941.)

But "the increase in juvenile delinquency," Dr. Wertham charges now, in a second statistical argument, "has gone hand in hand with the distribution of comic books." (*Saturday Review of Literature*, May 29, 1948.) But is this not the kind of fallacy that enabled a playful statistician to prove that the stork delivers babies? The evidence, it will be remembered, was: the higher the number of storks in a district, the higher, too, the number of childbirths. Storks as well as childbirths happen to be more frequent in rural areas than in industrial and urban ones. Similarly, a common root cause might in the past decade have led to the increase in juvenile delinquency and the number of comic books.

Nearly fifty cities—among them Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, Indianapolis, Terre Haute, and Hillsdale, Michigan*—have already acted against the sale of comic books deemed harmful to youth, but there is as yet no news that this has resulted in a decrease in juvenile delinquency.

On the other side, Lauretta Bender, another New York psychiatrist and a leading defender of the comic books, denies that the printed word leads directly to imitative behavior by children. "Well-balanced children are not upset by even the more horrible scenes in the comics as long as the reason for the threat of torture is clear, and the issues are well stated. If the child seems to react with some emotional or behavior disorder to reading the comic books, the reason predisposing him to the trigger action it supplies lies within the child and should be sought. It is evident from our case studies that whatever anxiety, aggression, or confusion was attributable to the comic books could be traced further back to the basic traumatic factor within the children's background. . . ." (Lauretta Bender and Reginald Lourie, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 1941.) Four case studies of children are given by the authors.

The drive to criminal aggression—and its counterpart, its repression creating guilt and anxiety feelings of a disturbing nature—appears in only a minority of children. (But here, it seems likely from the evidence of both supporters and attackers, the communication of violence is likely to increase, if not mobilize and stimulate, these drives.) Therefore, we should not speak of the effect of these media on "the mind of the child": we can only observe their effects on the minds of different children with different personalities, backgrounds, and predispositions.

For healthy children, Dr. Bender sees only healthy rather than harmful effects. "Normal, well-adjusted children with active minds, given insufficient outlets or in whom natural outlets for adventure are curbed, will demand satisfaction in the form of some excitement. Their desire for blood and thunder is a desire to solve the problems of the threats of blood and thunder against themselves or those they love, as well as the problem of their own impulses to retaliate and punish in like forms. The comics may be said to offer the same type of mental catharsis that Aristotle claimed was an attribute of the drama."

According to Freud and his close followers, this was also the purpose and effect of the entertainment presented by folk and fairy tales. "Fairy tales have a constructive value; they

* Twenty states' statutes forbid the sale of obscene, indecent, harmful, or immoral literature, and these statutes are being used against some comic books. However, a recent decision of the United States Supreme Court held unconstitutional a New York State law that prohibited distribution of magazines composed principally of criminal news or stories of bloodshed and lust—a law sometimes used against the sale of comic books. On its "balance sheet of civil liberties," the American Civil Liberties Union listed this Supreme Court decision as a favorable item.

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fulfill children's wishes, they have the same structure as dreams, and their content is really nothing more than the disguised realization of wishes," wrote Sandor Lorand (*Psychoanalytic Quarterly,* 1935). And in an analysis of fairy tales, D. S. Ferenczi wrote: "Fantasies of omnipotence remain the dominating ones. Just where we have most humbly to bow before the forces of nature, the fairy tale comes to our aid with its typical motifs. In reality we are weak, hence the heroes of fairy tales are strong and unconquerable; in our activities and knowledge we are cramped and hindered by time and space, hence in fairy tales one is immortal, is in a hundred places at the same time, sees into the future and knows the past. . . . In fairy tales man has wings, his eyes pierce the walls, his magic wand opens all doors. A man may live in perpetual fear of attack from dangerous beasts and fierce foes, in the fairy tales a magic cap enables every transformation and makes us inaccessible." (*Sex in Psychoanalysis,* 1916.)

Those defending the modern mass entertainment of violence draw a close analogy between the fantasy of folklore and fairy tales and the fantasy of the comic books. "We concluded that the comics—dealing with universal problems of relationship of the self to the physical and social reality; replete with rapid action and repetition; giving continuity to a central character who invites identification; free to experiment with fantastic solutions, but with good ultimately triumphing over evil, like the folklore of other times, serve as a means to stimulate the child's fantasy life and so help him to solve the individual and sociological problems inherent in his living." (Lauretta Bender, *Journal of Educational Sociology,* 1944.)

THIS folklore of our time—produced on the assembly line by hard-working writers and cartoonists, stimulating the child's fantasy life by skillfully mixing some sex (for adult readers) with much violence (for the kids), with technological good (be it the electric chair, the G-man's gun, or Batman's death-rays) ultimately triumphing—can, however, be most easily talked about in such comfortable generalities if one resolutely removes from one's sight their actual, concrete content. If the all-out attackers of the comic books have selected only a few atypical criminal children out of thousands of comic-book readers, the all-out defenders have selected, it would seem, only a few atypical comic books from the hundreds on the newsstands, and concentrated on the fairy-tale qualities of Mickey Mouse and Superman, to the exclusion of the much more frequent *Crime, Police, Jungle, Fight, Weird, Rangers,* and countless other "action" comics. The fairy tale analogy breaks down when applied to the contents and character of eighteen out of twenty-five comic books given this writer by his newsdealer, when he was asked for those he sells most often to the kids in the neighborhood (which is not particularly tough or crime-ridden).

Actually, what problems are shown and solved by these books?

"All the revulsion civilized men feel for the beast that appears in a female from time to time . . . ," begins a story in one of these books, the story of the "pig-woman," who "like a beast slew men for money" in sixty-two different cartoons, and was executed only in the sixty-fourth. A half-naked girl, looking like the poorest man's pin-up girl, is, in another book, consecutively crushed by an airplane, attacked by a lion, whipped by a man, attacked by a leopard, tied and whipped by a savage, and finally rescued by a blond man in a bathing suit who says: "Pah, you silly woman. The lumbering rhino stalks better than you." In another comic book, a wounded man lies on the floor, saying: "Hey fellers, I'm hit. Ugh, wait for me. Ugh Ugh," while his three pistol-packing friends voice the following sentiments:

"Hank got it in the chest. He's done for. Let him croak."

"He's gotta be finished off. He's sure to squeal if them bulls get their claws on him."

"He could spill enough to fry us all a dozen times. Let 'im have it."

THE analogy between fairy tales and mass entertainment does not hold for two reasons: First, fairy tales happened "once upon a time," in a world conspicuously removed in age and dimension from that in which the child lives; the stories of mass entertainment happen in our day, are acted out by real people, have as background the drugstore, the hotel, the boardwalk, the living room of the child's actual environment. While fairy tales do indeed offer fantasies, mass-produced modern murder tales offer facts of life in dark, stark realism. As a matter of fact, quite a few of the comic books are called *TRUE Stories, TRUE Crime Comics, REAL Detective Comics,* and so on, just as the preamble to many crime shows on screen

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and radio stresses the fact that they are painted from life, after actual happenings.

Second, the media of entertainment by violence are produced and consumed continuously, telling in variations the same stories over and over again, and becoming a routine part of the child's daily life, as repetitious and exciting as other parts of his life. Different from the Punch-and-Judy show in which children used to indulge once in a while, different from fairy tales of which children got tired after hearing them too often, mass entertainment offers new thrills, chills, and lessons every day, almost every hour. The alcoholism of a man who gets himself drunk every night cannot be considered harmless or healthy, even if we may admit that it is harmless or healthy to get drunk a few times every year. The difference in consumed quantities, whether in liquor or stories, should, it seems, make for different effects; in both we would seem to have the right to be concerned over the existence of a high "habit-forming" potential.

And, indeed, the strong effect of repetition, often indeed the ubiquity, of realistic horror on the child's mind has been observed in the work of several child psychologists: "By the very repetition of the 'biff and bang' theme day after day, on radio, printed page, screen, conflict and aggression become too permissible. This either activates a child's guilt on account of his own hostile impulses, or it replaces guilt with underdeveloped conscience," Dr. Auguste Allpert has observed.

Her latter point is confirmed by Dr. Katherine Wolf who notes that "excessive readers (of comic books) do not identify themselves with the hero; he symbolizes a deity or savior to whom they delegate all responsibility" (*Child Study*, Spring 1948). Dr. Wolf found, in an unpublished study conducted in cooperation with Marjorie Fiske for Columbia University's Bureau of Applied Social Research, that excessive comic-book readers (those who read more than five, sometimes as many as twenty, comic books per week) tend to identify themselves with the protégé of the hero rather than with the invincible hero himself (e.g., the young side-kick of Batman, rather than Batman himself). Moderate readers, on the other hand, tend to identify with the hero. This pattern of identification with irresponsible, "stooge" characters who have handed all their powers and hopes to an infallible superior human being, remains unchanged among the excessive readers from early childhood to adolescence. In personal interviews with them, the researcher found them usually undersized and underweight, mostly older children of families with numerous offspring, and their personal behavior showed a very aggressive or extremely frightened pattern. This suggests that excessive addiction to the comic books may be a symptom rather than a cause of personality disorders.

On the other hand, healthier children, according to Dr. Wolf's study, do not identify themselves at all with comic-book characters before the age of nine or ten, when they enjoy the thrilling but understandable world of Walt Disney. And they stop identifying themselves with the invincible hero at fourteen or fifteen, when they begin to understand that they have to grapple with the difficulties of life. But even in these so-called normal cases, where no individual fixations or frustrations are "mobilized" by the comic books, it appears quite probable that the image of the strange adult world presented to the children may leave lasting imprints on their minds.

It is hard to avoid at least a tentative conclusion that mass entertainment by violence —being part of the child's life in regular routine repetition, and showing the facts of life in seemingly true depiction—tends to become the child's education to violence.

People in our society are frustrated by their inability to solve their problems by certain acts and behavior patterns which society has outlawed and suppressed, but which nevertheless may seem to some very desirable—aggression, destruction, violence. For many grown-ups, the vicarious experience offered by mass entertainment may legitimately and usefully help them find *escapes* from, or solutions of, these conflicts. For adolescents, however, it creates a firm picture of a world of violence into which they grow, and to which they have to adjust themselves; it conflicts with, and may supersede, the image of democracy, with its moral and spiritual values and emphasis on the sanctity of human life, which they are officially taught. It is an education which shows individual and social violence as the solution of human problems.

The real point is not that the children will tend to resort to violence themselves; it is rather that they begin to *accept* violence, when practiced by others, as "normal," just as Americans

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in the last war began to accept the idea of putting people in concentration camps, even when practiced by "their" side, as normal.

Granted that this message has not been primarily created by the media of modern mass entertainment, which merely express a basic drive, repressed in our time, trying to struggle out of its repression; nevertheless, it seems inescapable that the continuous expression and communication of repressed desires makes them appear to young minds as a permissible reality, and confirms them as primary forces in future social life.

The media of murderous mass entertainment express and also teach a society in which survival means to kill rather than to be killed, to destroy rather than to be destroyed, to be tougher, shrewder, and technically better equipped than your neighbor.* The hero of the success story of our time is Dick Tracy rather than Horatio Alger; while the latter made good by a prayerful, profitable, peaceable, and progressive life, the former survives by being quicker on the trigger, by slugging it out without mercy, by keeping shooting and alive even when his situation seems desperate.

And this is a perfect picture of godless, totalitarian man. We are taught that there are good and bad people, and the good people will prevail, not because their cause is good, or their means and ways morally better, but because they have—physically, mentally, and technologically—better weapons, or simply better luck. There is no forgiveness for the bad, no temptation for the good. Man belongs wholly either to the good or the bad, those who must be victorious or those who must be killed in the end (these often happen to show a foreign, "racially inferior," physical appearance).

Finally, there are the dangerous implications emerging from the at first puzzling fact, from Dr. Wolf's study, that among the most intense readers of comic books there is identification, not with the hero, but with the weak person who depends on him. The passivity of modern man—his tendency to be less the active participant than the spectator, less the responsible citizen than the unconcerned onlooker, less an independent individual than a helpless bystander vesting his hopes and his enmities in an omnipotent hero-ruler—is mirrored in this tendency among comic-book readers. Again, we may ask, are we dealing with a very early pattern that finds its expression in the attitude children take up toward comic books, or is the attitude inculcated by comic books? And again the answer is—comic books can hardly be given any large responsibility for creating this attitude, but by popularizing it they can hardly avoid strengthening and developing the trend toward the robotization of the individual, à la Germany and Russia.

The wishdream and *Weltanschauung* of totalitarian men produced by the insecurity of our time, expressed by our entertainment industry, taught to our children by their favorite leisure-time occupation, thus seems the real danger of comic books and other horrors. The official juvenile entertainment by violence turns into an underground education to violence.

This education to violence, while hardly presenting the "clear and present danger" of causing juvenile crime waves, breaks the ground for a future criminal society. Individual insecurity and social anxiety, the common roots of both the murder trend in entertainment and increasing juvenile delinquency, can lead to brute force and terror as a normal basis for society where today it is only an abnormal individual behavior pattern. If that is the case, the comic books may be helping to educate a whole generation for an authoritarian rather than a democratic society.

*It seems especially unfortunate that comic books have become part of America's effort to help a democratic Europe:

"Dear sirs: I am the president of the Blue Bolt Comic Club," a comic book reader writes; "our club is organized to help the unfortunate people in Europe. We send comics to kids who can't afford to buy them. We have sent three packages containing three *Blue Bolt* comic books in each package. . . ." Thus is a distorted and dangerous picture of America distributed together with canned milk and vitamins among the young people of Europe.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

On Being Taken Up by "Society"

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have read with great interest the article "A Refugee Looks at Anti-Semitism Here," by my friend Robert Pick, in the September Commentary. Nobody regrets more than I do the fact that in this country, where every loyal citizen subscribes to the doctrine that all men are created equal, there nevertheless exists discrimination against Jews. But the nature of American discrimination is not so simple as Robert Pick assumes.

There is indeed a lunatic political fringe that once dreamed it could ride into power, like Hitler, on anti-Semitism. This fringe, always thin, has grown thinner since the fall of Hitler. There has been discrimination against Jewish scholars in the university world. This has greatly abated since the time when I first sat on a faculty. I have played an active part, and am still playing an active part, in placing Jewish scholars in colleges and universities. I am often surprised to find how completely shattered are the barriers against Jews.

There has been discrimination against Jewish students, New York State being the chief offender. Such discrimination has been prohibited by a law enacted last year, a law with sufficient teeth and a good administrative set-up. Since the great majority of college teachers hate discrimination, there is every reason for believing that we shall hear no more of it in New York, and little elsewhere.

There is discrimination in the civil-engineering profession; and the great law firms exclude Jewish lawyers, except perhaps for one or two promising men, serving to lift the charge of intolerance. Granted that such discrimination is hard on a few individuals, the range of professional and business opportunities open to Jews is wide. On the level of the manual trades and farming there is no discrimination that amounts to anything.

A Jewish friend of mine refuses to have children because he thinks it wrong to bring a child into the world to face discrimination. But when I see a Jewish baby I reflect that its chances in life, in America, are better than those of a baby born into a Gentile household of the same class. The Jewish baby has the great advantage of a family system focusing attention upon the child and approving and encouraging every advance it makes.

In these essentials I see no prospect of a worsening situation.

Social anti-Semitism is another matter. No individual merit can break down the barriers against the Jew in "society." But "society" excludes also most Gentiles. In a college town, for example, downtown society finds very few, if any, professors acceptable. Here and there a man of the right origin and relations happens into a university faculty and enjoys the great privilege of occasionally playing with the snobs, almost invariably the stupidest circle in town. But I have known professors, otherwise intelligent, sadly bitten by the sense of social exclusion.

But it may be said, a Gentile professor, if he could be born again and born right, may be taken up by "society." No rebirth or succession of rebirths would make the Jew a welcome recruit to "society," unless he were completely successful in de-Jewing himself.

"The Jew," a "society" authority will say, "is not one of us." And is he? Was it not the Jews themselves who set their people apart, wherever they might sojourn? And do they not mean to keep their people apart, till the expiry of time? There are, to be sure, many Jews who do not relish this apartness. But they are a minority. Some of them, as Robert Pick points out, change their names and perhaps their religion, meaning to merge their blood with the majority, as do successful members of other immigrant groups. This is a way out that few Jews will take.

For the most part the Jewish American will remain a Jew, retaining enough of the Jewish religion and Jewish customs for group identification. For all that, he may be completely integrated in American life, as are the older families in many of our cities, like the Brandeises and Flexners in Louisville. Yet he will not be accepted by "society."

Is that a dreary prospect? It has been my good fortune to be admitted occasionally to groups of both kinds, the intellectual fringe of "society" and Jewish intellectual groups. I can testify that for wide-ranging interest in literature, philosophy, political science, music, and

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the other arts, the Jewish groups are overwhelmingly superior. I can't bring it over my heart to be very sorry for anyone who is confined to them.

ALVIN JOHNSON

The New School
New York City

Our Almost-Clear Crystal Ball

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Cobb Myers' "Opinion Polls and Public Policy" in the November COMMENTARY is an excellent analysis and one that is very much needed today.

We shall doubtless have a flood of good critical articles now that November 2 has come and gone. Mr. Myers deserves very great credit indeed for having seen the importance of the defects and limitations of the polls long before these recent events. I am also sure that you should share in the honor for having seen the value of publishing this type of material.

ARTHUR KORNHAUSER

Wayne University
Detroit, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was greatly interested to read Robert Cobb Myers' article on "Opinion Polls and Public Policy," though . . . if Mr. Myers had any doubts about the reliability of the polls' prediction of a Dewey victory, he certainly kept them well hidden from his readers. . . .

Putting this aside, however, I would like to raise a more serious point. Like so many critics of public-opinion polls, Mr. Myers maintains the thesis that polls are unreliable as predictions because they are not sufficiently scientific. The proper thesis is that polls are unreliable *precisely because they are scientific*. God Himself, operating as the perfect scientific pollster, could not accurately predict the course of human events, because this course is subject to spiritual, creative change, which necessarily escapes scientific prediction.

The method of science projects the relationships and conditions of the past into the future, and holds that these relationships and conditions will continue unchanged throughout time. The method of science has achieved marvelous results in the field of inanimate nature. It also has a certain amount of predictive grip on human affairs—because there are sizable segments of human affairs which are relatively stable. However, it is superstitious to seek, by the further development of scientific tools, to extend the sphere of prediction to such a point as to leave no room for human freedom or human creative change. A country where Gallup is king is fit to be inhabited only by robots, not by men.

The worship of election forecast polls and public opinion polls—the tendency to substitute prediction for intelligent social and political deliberation and action—springs from the superstitious worship of science in human affairs. For that reason it cannot properly be fought by critics like Mr. Myers who take their stand on the need of improving the scientific quality of the polls. The people who hunger for absolute prediction will brush aside such cautions as Mr. Myers presents—they expect to attain their object immediately. On the other hand, such people, precisely because they are superstitious fanatics, are unshaken by factual disappointments. The polls went wrong today, but tomorrow we'll predict perfectly! That has been the constant cry of the Gallups and the Ropers—and of the credulous public as well.

The only way to combat the superstitious worship of science—whether in polls or in psychology—is by reviving the essentially human studies of ethics, politics, literature, art, and religion, and by developing a clarified philosophy which assigns to the spiritual studies and to the empirical sciences their proper spheres of activity. Many articles in COMMENTARY are genuine contributions along this line, but Mr. Myers' article definitely falls short.

BENJAMIN GINZBURG

Norwalk, Connecticut

Cloak-and-Dagger Dept.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Having only recently had the opportunity of reading your November 1948 issue, I should like to protest strongly against the stab-in-the-back article by Robert Weltsch on the Bernadotte Plan.

It came as no surprise that a man like Weltsch who even kept on pleading for collaboration with the British oppressors at a time when Jewish Resistance fighters were strung up on the gallows in Palestine jails, should favor this sinister plan.

But I am less concerned with the thoroughly discredited Dr. Weltsch, who simply carries on in the tradition of a certain part of German Jewry, famous for their belly-crawling.

I am more disturbed by the fact that a monthly of your admittedly high standard should at this time of decision implicitly endorse a plan which is nothing but a British Foreign Office plot to strangle the Jewish state.

The recent presidential election has shown how utterly out of touch with the people editors and publishers can become. Have you ever bothered to listen to what the Jewish man in

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the street thinks about the so-called Bernadotte Plan?

Take heed then, lest your COMMENTARY might easily turn into a swan song if you are going to ignore perversely the trend amongst American Jews.

ERIC M. EISENBERG

[If Mr. Eisenberg will re-read the text of Robert Weltsch's article (especially the section dealing with the Negev), he will see that Dr. Weltsch did not "endorse" the Bernadotte Plan. Dr. Weltsch is a well-informed, responsible journalist; his assignment from us was to provide a reasoned and sober appraisal of the facts of the Bernadotte Plan as he saw them; this we consider he did admirably. To edit a good magazine it is useful to have, besides thoughtful writers, thoughtful readers. COMMENTARY, happily, seems to have them. Despite the high emotion understandably evoked by the Palestine situation, Mr. Eisenberg's comment on this article was the only one of its kind this magazine received.—ED.]

Brandeis and Holmes

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read the Solomon Bloom article on Louis D. Brandeis in the October COMMENTARY. There are so many imponderable X's in the life of Brandeis that no article about him is without excitement to me, who loved him. I wish Bloom had explored some of the following which still intrigue me: How come that this man had no aesthetic sense? His home, his pictures, his surroundings were ugly. The only beautiful thing about Brandeis was Brandeis himself. Then again, how come that Holmes, Brandeis, and Cardozo thought so much alike, or, to put it more accurately, would have come to the same ultimate conclusions on most important issues—Holmes the lusty Brahmin, Cardozo the virginal aesthete, and Brandeis the slide-rule mathematician?

I have a feeling that much of the confusion in our present Supreme Court arises from the fact that whereas Brandeis and Holmes invariably came to the same conclusions, we are only now learning that they came from different springboards and traveled through different arcs. The underlying divisions in the present bench are making clear this division in basic philosophies, or, at least, in approaches to life held by Brandeis and Holmes. Then again, I wish Bloom or someone else would comment further on the effect of Brandeis' concept of the danger of bigness in relation to what is happening in our economic world today.

There are so many facets to Louis D. Brandeis that no one can cover them all. Just one more note. In a book of mine recently published, entitled *So Far So Good,* I tried to tell the story of the battle of Brandeis against Walter Winchell, where it looks as if Walter has won out against L.D.B. on the right of privacy.

MORRIS L. ERNST

New York City

Advance Intelligence

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read with much interest Dr. Kurt List's article about Arnold Schoenberg's cantata, *A Survivor of Warsaw,* in the November COMMENTARY. It anticipated the first performance of the work in Albuquerque and the article in *Time* magazine.

Schoenberg's new work is unknown to most of us, the score is not published yet. But the new opus opens a wide interest in the whole area of musical structure, treatment of the speaking voice, setting of the text to music, the use of a traditional Hebrew song, the relation of the twelve-tone technique to the whole, etc. *Above all the theme itself!*

The amazing richness of Dr. List's points of departure, the multitude of his associations, is more than stimulating, although his attempt to place Schoenberg as the border figure between Jewish and Western culture appears to me a bit willful and premature.

May I add that I found the November issue of COMMENTARY vigorous, serious, and stimulating as ever.

KAROL RATHAUS

Queens College
Flushing, New York

Thanks, But—

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I do not wish to appear ungrateful, and I appreciate Myron Kaufmann's willingness to forgive me for certain mild prejudices so long as I refrain from translating them into action. But I don't really need his forgiveness; my article ["A Liberal Gentile Looks at Himself," July 1948] was, in large part, an expression of self-forgiveness. Mr. Kaufmann's article ["A Little Bit Prejudiced," in the October COMMENTARY] is a useful personal testimony, but as a comment on my views I think it is on the wrong track.

Mr. Kaufmann implies that my inclination to get away and relax with some biased provincial is a reaction against "the boisterous Jewish boys from the poorer parts of town." In my article it was against my liberal advisers that I was

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reacting—and I made it clear that these advisers were Gentiles, not Jews, boisterous or otherwise.

The purpose of my article was two-fold: to reduce the guilt (and therefore the potential hostility) of Gentiles who are trying, under pressure of unrealistic propaganda, to be impossibly good; and to warn certain liberal propagandists that, through their excessive demands, they are alienating a number of fairly decent people. Although this alienation may never be expressed in intolerant action, it may be expressed in *failure* to act at some time when action is needed to defend the rights of minorities.

I think that articles like mine—which Mr. Kaufmann good-humoredly dismisses as breast-beating—may throw some light on the psychology of individuals who are not as safely under rational control as Mr. Kaufmann and I assume we ourselves are. Some of these less rational individuals may not succeed in working out their problems harmlessly. An understanding of *my* tensions (and of Mr. Kaufmann's) may suggest ways of coping with theirs—and ways of preventing the outbreak of these feelings into harmful actions. Mr. Kaufmann is apparently satisfied to wait for the outbreak. I'd rather not.

GEORGE WELTNER

New York City

One Man's Meat

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The review of Howard Fast's *My Glorious Brothers* in your December issue by Milton Himmelfarb is a wretched piece of work. Whatever its occasional demerits, *My Glorious Brothers* is one of the most inspiring Jewish novels I have ever read. The bias and partisanship of Himmelfarb's review are incredible. In the light of his remarks concerning "love of violence," I recommend to the reviewer a re-reading of the Books of the Maccabees in the Apocrypha, from which Winston Churchill saw fit to quote when he roused the British peoples on becoming Prime Minister to carry forward the struggle against the Nazis and the Fascists. Himmelfarb's review is the only unfriendly one I have read among the many which have appeared, and it does not do him or your periodical any honor.

RABBI LOUIS I. NEWMAN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The "occasional demerits" of Fast's book, as my review pointed out, are these: it is ignorant, it is Stalinist-oriented, it is racist, it loves violence for its own sake—and it is bad writing. The Book of Maccabees is a great document and Winston Churchill was an inspiring leader of his people in war, but I do not see the relevance of these facts to the worth of *My Glorious Brothers*. I take Rabbi Newman's word that other reviews were favorable. This too is irrelevant.

MILTON HIMMELFARB

New York City

A Point of Kashruth

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the amusing story, "Memo from the Thirty-Six," in the September issue, the translator's slip is showing when he transforms the Hebrew Shor Ha Bor into a Wild Boar. Personally, I have no religious scruples against eating pork, but it disagrees with me and I am looking forward to a juicy sirloin steak cut from the great ox, Behemoth, when and if—

JOSEPH KRIMSKY

Huntington, W. Va.

On Commentary

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I need not tell you that I have been following with very much satisfaction the progress of COMMENTARY, the continuing high standard of material and the increasing number of advertisements. You and the magazine have had my hearty support in this part of the country, and I have been very proud to recommend it to the libraries of the various colleges where I have lectured in recent years as well as to individual friends. . . .

RABBI JOSEPH L. BARON

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

We have received the July issue of COMMENTARY which marks the beginning of its sixth volume. On this occasion, we have pleasure in conveying to you our best fraternal wishes for success and prosperity.

May I tell you that personally I find your magazine the most excellent in its kind. The articles published in COMMENTARY are studies of great documentary value which give a true picture of the problems of Jewish or general concern.

COMMENTARY now is a "must" among our reading material, and those who contribute to it are indeed to be heartily congratulated for the fine work they are doing.

It is consequently a pleasure for us to express to you here all our appreciation in this regard.

SAM COHEN
Assistant Editor

La Boz de Türkiye
Istanbul

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Style of Babel

BENYA KRIK, THE GANGSTER and other stories. By ISAAK BABEL. Edited by Avrahm Yarmolinsky. Schocken Books. 122 pp. $1.50.

Reviewed by JOHN BERRYMAN

CRITICS of Babel's work—European critics, that is, for in this country he is imperfectly available and little known—have not found it very easy to describe. Its strength is obvious. It is physical, nervous, intense, short, in degrees almost unrivalled. But what are we to say of its mode that it will not itself at once contradict?

He is romantic and impassioned, we decide, recalling the violent emotions that rock in his pages, the inveterate lonely "I," the fierce childhoods, pogroms, insatiable desires; very well; then there throng to us passages where passion is suspended in an emotion-of-attention as pure as any that 19th- and 20th-century art has exacted from us. Under the narrator's window in "Entry into Berestetchko" the Cossacks are employed in "shooting an old, silvery-bearded Jew for spying." He utters piercing screams, and struggles. "Then Kudria, of the machine-gun section, took hold of his head and tucked it under his arm. The Jew stopped screaming and set his legs apart. Kudria drew out his dagger with his right hand and carefully, without splashing himself, cut the old man's throat." That is all there is, and it must not be imagined that the context suggests any comment; the Cossacks go off, and "I went along after them, roaming through Berestetchko. . . ." The muscles of the description barely ripple: "The Jew stopped screaming and set his legs apart." Chekhov would have recognized a peer, perhaps, as well as colleague, in the author of this sentence.

AT FIRST glance not unlike Chekhov also is Babel's lyricism. "Thus sang Afonka and fell a-drowsing. The song floated away like smoke. And then we neared the heroic dusk whose foaming rivers flowered along the embroidered cloth of the peasant fields. The stillness grew roseate. Like a cat's back the earth lay overgrown with the gleaming fur of corn." But this is not Chekhov or Gogol, and neither is this: "The brigades were in action in the broad-flat plains. The sun was traveling through a purple haze. In a ditch some wounded were taking a bite; while lying about on the grass were nurses, singing softly." These oddly more resemble the prose of an American of the previous generation, Stephen Crane, and Babel resembles Crane, dispassionate and lyrical, rather than any Russian author.

In their animism, too, their fantastic animation generally, they show a startling accidental congruity. "The peaceful Volhyen leaves us in sinuous curves and is lost in the pearly haze of the birches; crawling between flowery slopes it winds weary arms about a wilderness of hops. The orange sun rolls down the sky like a decapitated head. . . ."; and again "the garden path shimmers beneath a black, passionate sky. Thirsty roses sway in the darkness. Green lightning blazes upon the domes . . ."; or "I sat apart slumbering, dreams leaping about me like kittens." Babel is only warm, Crane (whom in my space I cannot illustrate) cold. But their *economy*, in which both evidently learnt from and went beyond Maupassant, is less accidental; it is what they have blazing in common, what makes them forerunners and models of modern intensity. It is the international fertilization that is striking—a phenomenon now familiar in recent as in earlier poetry, and not less important, though often unregistered, in the prose of a dwindling, interlinking culture.

ISAAK BABEL'S status as an Odessa Jew, discovered by Gorki at twenty-one, in 1915, and then a soldier with Budenny's Cossacks in Poland, is itself international. In exploration of his material he reverses Crane's order (the slums, then war), treating the ghetto after he had written of the revolution. But the tensions

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in Babel forbade concern with the war as military. Only two or three times in his collection *Red Cavalry* (in English, 1929)—from which my quotations have been taken—does he touch actual fighting. His subject is the terror and suffering of a military occupation (Poland as ghetto), and himself, in spectacles, "haloed with ingenuousness," ambiguously allied with the occupying Cossacks—"But my heart stained with bloodshed, jarred and brimmed over."

The pride and shame issue clearly enough in transferences such as that wherein the Red General, Matvey Pavlitchenko, revisits his former master. "Jackal's conscience," the master calls him. The remarkable passage that closes the story is also a sort of aesthetic: "Then I stamped on my barin Nikitinsky, and trampled him for an hour or more. And in that time I got to know life through and through. With shooting—I'll put it that way—with shooting you only get rid of a chap. Shooting's letting him off and too damned easy for yourself. With shooting you'll never get to the soul, to where it is in a fellow and how it goes and shows itself. But I don't spare myself, and I've more than once trampled an enemy for over an hour. You see, I want to get to know what life really is and how it is inside us—"

THE later stories—most of these in the handsome and welcome small volume under review are of this period—return the subject to its origin, studying the Odessa ghetto under the aspects, first of his childhood, second of the figure of the Powerful (lawless) Jew as Hero. I think no relaxation is perceptible. The rapidity and energy that shocked British and American reviewers twenty years ago are present still, welded with Jewish folk-idiom into a density of brilliance hardly equalled in the earlier stories except by "Sashka, the Christ" and one or two others.

Babel is one of the most interesting figures in the European prose of this last half-century. But the limitation of subject is absolute. It must remain doubtful for the present how far Babel's long, depressing silences—in the latest, he has published nothing since the early 30's, and his present situation is unknown—are due to the regime, and how far to the nature of his talent.

Mr. Raymond Rosenthal in a valuable account (COMMENTARY, February 1947) follows Max Eastman and others in attributing them largely to the regime, though he speaks also of a mingling, in Babel's thought, of art with eroticism which may have produced inhibition.

Conceivably, however, Babel, facing his subject at last directly, exhausted it. The wonderful humor of the hero-stories is a form of acceptance, as is the humor of another obsessive story-teller (and another deeply physical, and Jewish one) who fell silent, Kafka. If he had wished to write on, one would have expected him to move after Essenin and Mayakovsky into the final opposition.

BABEL'S work displays uncertainty of general form, if we compare it with *Dubliners;* his story-sequences are neither really single nor altogether disparate, and he seems to be incapable of narrative development even as we see it in *The Duel* or *Maggie.* Probably the limitation is a concomitant of his dazzling mastery of detail form (style) and his extraordinary sense for the form of the single small piece.

As Stendhal, when we are under his spell, makes other authors seem *stupid,* Babel as we read him makes other authors seem diffuse and fat. A study of his form-sense might begin with the piercing story "First Love" (COMMENTARY, September 1947), which should be compared with Joyce's "Araby." This sense is anti-psychological and anti-logical, and beyond this I shall not attempt to say what it was.

Let us first have the stories collected, all of them, in their order. For the truth is, that grateful as we must be for this small book Schocken has put together, it is not quite what was wanted. Every reader with ears should buy it. But "First Love" is not here, a story mentioned by Mr. Rosenthal is not, and there must be others, and the Knopf *Red Cavalry* has long been unobtainable. More serious still, Mr. Yarmolinsky's translations are a little fat (the two stories done by others here are better). They compare very unfavorably with Nadia Helstein's, who did *Red Cavalry* with dignity and feeling (but her "blighter" and "jolly fine" will not do, nor indeed any of her renderings of the slang stories), and with the nervous, good versions in COMMENTARY by Esther and Joseph Riwkin (but they appear to leave things out sometimes). This exemplary style of Babel's is plainly, is notoriously, hard; and it has got to be exactly done.

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The UN, Israel, and the Powers

THE BIRTH OF ISRAEL. By JORGE GARCIA-GRANADOS. Knopf. 291 pp. $3.00. WE NEED NOT FAIL. By SUMNER WELLES. Houghton Mifflin. 143 pp. $2.50 HATE, HOPE AND HIGH EXPLOSIVES. By GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT. Bobbs-Merrill. 284 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by R. H. S. CROSSMAN

THESE three books, though published only recently, are already ancient history. But this does not mean that they are not worth reading. Mr. Fielding Eliot, to begin with the author whose findings have dated least, gives a lively account of a whirlwind tour of the Middle East, which lasted precisely from March 21 to May 26 of 1948. During these weeks he visited Palestine, Lebanon, Transjordan, Iraq, Persia, Egypt, Turkey, and Greece, and he writes with self-assurance about them all. Not unexpectedly, his general conclusions are very superficial. He assumed, for instance, that Mr. Bevin and Mr. Marshall had already last August reached a full accord on recognizing Israel! But this by no means destroys the value of his specialist observations on the Jewish and Arab armies. Though he only saw the skirmishes in Palestine prior to May 15, he convinced himself that the Jewish Army would easily dispose of all its rivals and, even more interesting, he found that British officers on the spot shared his view. Indeed, he tends to tip the balance too far and to underrate the size of the Egyptian Army and the quality of the Arab Legion. *Hate, Hope and High Explosives* is well worth reading, because it surveys the Middle East from the narrow viewpoint of Anglo-American strategy, and it recognizes that areas so remote from each other as Greece, Persia, the Sudan, and Palestine are part of a single problem, which demands a single Anglo-American policy.

MR. GRANADOS' scope is more limited. He has done for UNSCOP what Mr. Bartley Crum and this writer tried to do for the Anglo-American Committee—to combine the personal impressions of someone, previously unversed in the Palestine problem, with a record of the Commission's procedures. *The Birth of Israel* is freely written and conveys something of the gallant recklessness of its author's personality. Each Gentile who becomes engaged in the Palestine problem brings to it his own peculiar prejudices. Research into the documentation and travel along the well-worn road which every Commission treads, end sooner or later in a "conversion." The impartial investigator falls off the fence and becomes either pro-Arab or pro-Jew.

What is interesting, however, is to discover the precise factor which tipped each investigator off his unprejudiced—which here means uninterested—balance. In Dr. Granados' case, a Latin-American suspicion of British imperialism was transformed into passionate support for Israel by the discovery that the Kibbutz might suggest a solution for his own Guatemalan problems of land reclamation and land settlement. From that moment he felt as much at home in Israel as Brigadier Glubb among his Bedouin policemen in Transjordan. But even Dr. Granados' fervent faith did not extend to the belief that the Jewish Army could defeat six Arab armies. Like previous Commissioners —myself included—he felt that Israel, to survive, would need exterior aid. The aid he hoped to provide was a real UN Commission, backed by a police force recruited from the smaller powers to impose the partition frontiers upon the Arabs.

On this point Dr. Granados was in agreement with Sumner Welles, who also recognized very clearly that a police force would not be provided by the great powers and that, without it, an orderly partition was impossible. The United States, reluctant anyway to risk American lives in foreign wars, was fortified in this attitude by the realization that American participation in policing Palestine would involve Russian participation too. This accounts for Mr. Marshall's determination, even at the cost of substituting trusteeship for partition, to discover a solution acceptable to Mr. Bevin. The State Department has constantly striven to retain British military power as the guarantor of any settlement between Jews and Arabs, on the view, apparently, that Bevinism in the Middle East is a lesser evil than Communism.

IN *We Need Not Fail,* Sumner Welles sums up the arguments against this State Department policy. As we would expect, he has written a book remarkable both for its masterly narrative of a complex diplomatic story and for its sober analysis of the Palestine problem in

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terms of American interests. He recognizes, as very few Zionist apologists are ready to do, that the generosity of a great power cannot extend far beyond its national interests. So long as the United States was not itself engaged in Middle Eastern politics, it could afford to support Jewish claims, without considering too carefully the power political consequences of their fulfilment. In fact, it could be as "irresponsible" or as "sincere"—the terms are interchangeable—as the British Labor party when it was in opposition. But, since Roosevelt's notorious interview with Ibn Saud, the United States has become an oil importer, and the administration has consequently discovered a deep identity of interest with the British government. That is why it is determined to prop up the position of Britain as the major military power in the Middle East.

Unlike the shrill philanthropists and the party wheelhorses, who are the most vocal supporters of Israel, Mr. Welles is not shocked by this discovery. He is well aware that the Balfour Declaration was not an act of pure altruism. Though Balfour and Lloyd George were sincerely convinced of the justice of the Jewish demand for a National Home, they also saw, or thought they saw, that it could bring solid advantages to the British Commonwealth. Mr. Welles is too experienced a diplomat to dismiss this as British hypocrisy; and he recognizes that American support for Israel must at least be in conformity not only with the requirements of American domestic politics but with those of national security. In *We Need Not Fail,* he shows why national security requires support for Israel and, in particular, for the United Nations' decision of November 29. The argument is marshalled all the more persuasively for its cold logic.

BUT, like Dr. Granados, Mr. Welles did not foresee that the Jews within eight months would build up the most powerful military force in the Middle East, and that attempts would be made to use the machinery of UN not to save them from an Arab "Holy War" but to save the Arabs from annihilation. The UN, as a stick to beat Britain, becomes a boomerang when the political power position reverses itself.

In June, Mr. Bevin strenuously opposes sanctions against the invading Arab armies. He was overruled, and had to vote for an embargo on the sale of arms to the Arab states. In November, Mr. Truman, having accepted the Bernadotte Plan as a whole, must try to wriggle out of sanctions against the Jews, when they annul that plan by military operations in the Negev. The argument of *We Need Not Fail* takes no account of such a possibility.

Mr. Welles's difficulty arises from a widespread American delusion that UN is something more than the sum of its members, and that America can avoid its responsibility as a great power by "accepting a UN policy." The Charter of the UN, with its stress on the veto, expressly excludes such easy solutions. A great power, whether America, Russia, or Britain, will be happy when a UN decision coincides with its interests, and it will make every effort to ensure that all UN decisions do so. But, when the two conflict, it will make every effort to circumvent the UN decision. This is what Bevin did after November 29 and Marshall followed suit in April of this year. Whether Israel, which is not a great power, can afford to imitate Britain and America in this respect, is another question.

THE GREAT unsolved issue, therefore, is whether America is ready to become an active Middle Eastern power. This issue Mr. Welles avoids. If Mr. Truman is unwilling to assume military responsibilities in this area, then his friendship for Israel will be best expressed in advising Mr. Ben Gurion to come to terms with Mr. Bevin, and to achieve a settlement commensurate with Israel's strength. If, on the other hand, America is prepared to share with Britain the military responsibility of policing the Middle East, then Mr. Truman will be able positively to determine the nature of the settlement finally to be arrived at between London and Tel Aviv.

Mr. Welles never quite permits his logic to carry him to this conclusion. He still relies on UN as a *deus ex machina,* whereas Mr. Bevin and Mr. Ben Gurion both know that it is one instrument, but only one, in the battle of national interests. If it fails, other blunter instruments are to hand, and both Britain and the Jews have shown that they are ready to rely on the blunter instruments in an emergency. Unless America decides to step off the sideline, Britain and Israel—with Russia possibly intervening as a *tertius gaudens*—will have to settle the matter. Whether the settlement is inside or outside the framework of UN, will be of secondary importance.

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Too Late, Too Late

THE NEGRO NEWSPAPER. By VISHNU V. OAK. Ohio, Antioch Press. 170 pp. $2.50. JIM CROW AMERICA. By EARL CONRAD. Duell, Sloan, and Pearce. 237 pp. $3.00. THE HIGH COST OF PREJUDICE. By BUCKLIN MOON. Julian Messner. 168 pp. $2.50. THE PROTESTANT CHURCH AND THE NEGRO. By FRANK S. LOESCHER. Association Press. 159 pp. $3.00. COLOR AND CONSCIENCE. By BUELL G. GALLAGHER. Harper. 244 pp. $2.50. FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM. By JOHN HOPE FRANKLIN. Knopf. 622 pp. $5.00. THE NEGRO IN AMERICA. By ARNOLD ROSE. Harper. 325 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by JAMES BALDWIN

VISHNU V. Oak's *The Negro Newspaper* is an absurd and hysterical little pamphlet, published—quite justly—at the author's expense, which could easily have been written the day after Booker T. Washington made his "Separate-But-Equal" speech at the Atlanta Exposition. It is the first volume of a projected series of four concerning Negro business and argues, so far as I can wrest any meaning from Mr. Oak's stammering prose, for a segregated economy. Mr. Oak, apparently, considers this a desirable, if temporary solution for most problems faced by Negroes, and one which will, in addition, prepare them in some degree for their future splendors and responsibilities when America finally comes of age. He waxes rather petulant concerning the failure of the race to rise—within the limits set by segregation—to that lucrative position Americans so highly esteem; one can almost hear him saying, "They got no git-up, they don't stick together." "They" also have no money and as to where, in this complex economy, the money for a self-sustaining Negro economy is to come from, Mr. Oak is valiantly vocal but not very lucid. It will—presumably—be donated by philanthropic organizations (who tend anyway to unwise investments) and wealthy Negroes, unsuspected hordes of whom are, at present, pettishly investing their gold in Cadillacs.

One does not learn much about the Negro newspaper from Mr. Oak either. He discusses the "faults" (sensationalism, political irresponsibility) and the "virtues" (militant race pride) of the Negro press, betraying only the vaguest understanding of the forces dictating their existence. I suppose Mr. Oak, for all his strident good intentions, is betrayed by his astonishingly uncritical acceptance of the status quo and by his admiration for dynamic business methods, no matter how dangerous or how brutal these methods may be. This allows him to say, in answer to the not unreasonable contention that Negro capitalists are no more soft-hearted than white ones, that *"the exploitation of a people by some of its own people is less devastating than exploitation by outsiders."* (The italics are Mr. Oak's.) This—unless such a formidable loyalty is limited to Negroes—would make American labor one vast, happy, if rather sweaty family, chortling in proud delight each time the boss-man acquired a new mansion.

EARL CONRAD, in *Jim Crow America,* is not so fanciful, though he espies at the bottom of the racial squabble the glint of the Yankee dollar. He reduces the problem, therefore, to an essentially economic one, the solution to which will be found in a coalition of black and white in the ranks of American labor. But this attractive hypothesis demands of labor an organization, awareness, and power it does not have; it assumes a homogeneity in this most diverse of nations; and it discounts the profound ambition of the laborer to enter and to assume the loyalties of the middle class. If Mr. Oak writes as though we were living in the 1870's, Mr. Conrad has never, apparently, gotten past the 1930's, a period which was, to say the least, unique for most Americans and which is not likely, if repeated, to be quite so luckily handled. Mr. Conrad tirelessly amasses fact, figure, incident, and even allegory to prove that the status of the Negro and the unendurable legends used to support this status are based on nothing more profound than the lust for gold.

This, in a way, is certainly true, but it is not the whole truth; it leaves too much unaccounted for; nor does it consider, even granting the truth of the hypothesis, how this unethical greed and exploitation have operated on the conscience of the American white or on the psychology of the Negro. Since *Jim Crow America* ignores this complexity and confusion, Mr. Conrad's analysis of the Negro problem is

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finally superficial, a mere reiteration of the national shame. One is faced with a circular problem: if, on the one hand, Negroes achieved or were allowed, economic equality, prejudice would vanish; but, on the other hand, despite Mr. Conrad's hopeful or angry pronouncement, this integration will obviously not occur until the bar of prejudice itself has been dissolved.

Bucklin Moon, in *The High Cost of Prejudice,* takes up where Mr. Conrad leaves off; he begins by an extremely careful tabulation of what it costs the nation in dollars and cents to maintain this inequitable structure and the circular manner in which this structure feeds on and perpetuates itself. From this, however, he proceeds to consider the deadly and invisible toll in terms of our integrity as individuals and our morality as a nation. This consideration, which might have raised the book to a high level of penetration, is unhappily blunted by easy generalization and compulsive optimism, that national optimism which must find the ray of hope, which must not admit the darkness, be it ever so overwhelming. Hence, his book has a peculiarly muted tone; one closes it wondering why it seems so thin and pale, why all of Mr. Moon's earnestness and all of his dogged probing fail to be either moving or distinguished. This optimism is curious in that it is finally hopeless; one must, very literally, make the best of things, one must not explore anything profoundly. It is, one cannot help feeling, dangerous to do so.

In Mr. Moon's book, therefore, and to a greater or lesser degree in all of these books, however indignant the author may be, the best foot is always in evidence and is finally and firmly put forward; as though, at the end of a fire and brimstone sermon, the preacher were to adopt a jovial, almost intimate air, and to say: but all of you—I know you will do better, your hearts are pure, surely, we will meet in heaven. The desperate tremor which accompanies this benediction is wished away; the drunkard, the nymphomaniac, and the sadist, all clothed in the garments of salvation, go home obscurely comforted and thoroughly unchanged. Perhaps the note of hope is struck precisely in order to give people courage, to raise morale, so that the battle will not be lost. But this hopefulness depends on an insistent over-simplification, on platitude and platitudinous speculation, on a happy assumption that the status of the Negro is growing better, whereas, it is merely growing more complex.

This complexity whispers in *Color and Conscience* by Buell K. Gallagher and in Frank Loescher's *The Protestant Church and the Negro,* in which books the problem of color is attacked from a moral and religious viewpoint. Mr. Loescher's book is the less ambitious and perhaps the more successful: a heavily documented attack on the practical policies of the Protestant church, its systematic betrayal of the first principles of Christianity, its financial and moral support of the status quo. Mr. Loescher is, apparently, one of that unlucky minority who take their Christianity seriously, a hair-splitting refinement which the church has seldom considered necessary and which, indeed, it has frequently and strenuously opposed. The church, to be sure, has made "pronouncements" and is now on the record as being "against" segregation. But this has in no way affected the administration of Protestant dominated colleges, nor diminished the power of those restrictive covenants held by Protestant institutions; it has rarely led to an inter-racial church, except in those areas where Negroes (or Mexicans or Orientals) are so few as to be unnoticeable and too few to support a separate church. The decision of the church to be against segregation, which was belated in the first place, means, in practice, nothing; and those sufficiently uncharitable to put these pronouncements to the test—to demand, for instance, that Negro and white sit side by side in the church pew—are not entirely unjustified in concluding that these pronouncements do little more than save face. This cynicism, though, however accurate, is not quite fair, for these pronouncements, like these books, stem from disturbed and frightened consciences.

Buell K. Gallagher's *Color and Conscience* reiterates Mr. Loescher's thesis. It is vaster in outlook and angrier in tone; one would expect it also to be more penetrating, but this is not the case.

Mr. Gallagher says rather little that Mr. Loescher has not said, though he covers the ground so much more minutely that he seems to; he is concerned with history and the human personality, with time and society and the rigorous demands of conscience: he would make peace with them all. It is hard to assess his failure or give the reasons for it and harder still to say just why I found so much of his

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book repellent. It is not in what he says but somehow in the manner of his saying it, in what seemed to me to be a shrill and desperate self-righteousness, though Mr. Gallagher early declares his desire to avoid that pit. His book is at once so emotional and so careful, and strives so mightily to be both clear and honest, that it seems almost a blueprint of the advanced and disturbed American conscience; and his failure, with this comparison in mind, seems almost a prophecy of accelerating doom. His is a plea to time to halt for a while that we may make amends; and this is where Mr. Gallagher is defeated, for he does not dare to consider profoundly the independent energy generated by those two implacably interacting forces, history and the human personality. One hesitates to say—anticipating the epithets "mystic" or "defeatist"—that the emphasis is wrong, that there is no panacea, no deliverance, on the strength of good intentions. In a very real sense the Negro problem has become anachronistic; we ourselves are the only problem, it is our hearts only that we must search. It is neither a politic nor a popular thing to say, but a black man facing a white man becomes at once contemptuous and resentful when he finds himself looked upon as a moral problem for that white man's conscience.

John Hope Franklin's *From Slavery to Freedom* is an ambitious, top-heavy history beginning in Egypt centuries ago and ending in America of the present day. The title gives the book's tone and intent, but a simple reversal of the key words sums up its unintended effect. For Mr. Franklin, hopeful and painstaking as he is, can only prophesy a great day soon to come and dwell rather wistfully on the splendors past: this heritage and history which have become for the Negro in America, when not outright fantasy, an active source of shame. Mr. Franklin, a Negro and a Negro historian, is aware that there is demanded of him a greater objectivity than might be demanded of other men and in reaching for this objectivity he becomes very nearly fatuous and persistently shallow. His book—except for the desperate amassing of proof that the Negro is as loyal as any other citizen, has endured much, and deserves that freedom for which he has for so long been exhorted to be patient—is as pallid and platitudinous a performance as those high school textbooks which we feverishly consulted just before exams. Mr. Franklin, nevertheless, seeks to speak for the enlightened Negro, as Mr. Gallagher speaks for the enlightened white; and if Mr. Gallagher brooks no prejudice, Mr. Franklin harbors no bitterness. But their expressions of good-will, compulsive on the one hand and strained on the other, are defeated by the very necessity to formulate these expressions on the basis of color. One has the feeling that they protest too much.

Arnold Rose's *The Negro In America* is a condensation of Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, and is a more astute book than many of its predecessors and more comprehensive than any of them. *An American Dilemma* was impressed most forcibly on my mind long before I read it by a landlord, who, having refused to rent me an apartment, but wishing to assure me of his good intentions, told me he was reading it. I did not, happily, remain homeless long enough to discover what effect this had on his policy; but I am afraid that I brought to Mr. Myrdal's book, when I finally read it, that same impatience the landlord had caused me to feel. This is not, of course, fair to Mr. Myrdal and his associates and it is certainly not what is called taking the long view.

But it is just the value of this long view that I am beginning to question. Presumably, taking the long view means that one is able to consider and interpret the present in the light of the past; ideally, it leads to that sense of time and history which can operate to make present pain endurable, preventing the disintegration of the person under stress. Nevertheless, this long view, of which we speak so glibly, must be examined: whose long view and for what purpose and from what viewpoint?

And the very moment these questions are asked, this long view—which is demanded most vociferously of Negroes—emerges as something less lofty, comes close, indeed, to being nothing more than a system of justification. The American need for justification is a good deal stronger than the American sense of time—which began, as we are inclined to believe, with the Stars and Stripes. Thus, not even Mr. Rose's careful and comprehensive study escapes the pit into which all of these books fall: they record the facts but they cannot probe the immense, ambiguous, uncontrollable effect. The full story of white and

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black in this country is more vast and shattering than we would like to believe and, like an unhindered infection in the body, it has the power to make our whole organism sick.

We are sick now and relations between the races is only one of our symptoms. What is happening to Negroes in this country has been happening for a long time and it is something quite logical, inevitable, and deadly: they are becoming more American every day.

Pious Tearjerker

TALES OF MY PEOPLE. By SHOLEM ASCH. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons. 272 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by ISA KAPP

IN HIS early novelette, "The Little Town," reprinted in this collection, Sholem Asch turns on the "folk" the benevolent airs of a patriarch elated by holiday wine. His proud, tearful eye has difficulty making out individual figures, but he derives from the sense of flurry and the mere mention of family responsibility a surge of physical well-being. The Polish village becomes a night and day dispensary: bounty from rich to poor, parent to child, nature to man—a place of generous dowries and hot soup for the hungry.

Through floods, fires, and spring festivals, the village nestles in secure blankets of anthropomorphism ("God's world was like a chaste loving bride"; "the morning washed her newborn son, the new day"; the river Vistula, like a good Jew, observes the Sabbath). The exemplary Jew (a moneymaker) is surrounded by innocence, by cleanliness (endless ablutions go on in this story), and by women who demonstrate that they know their place, which is at the pot of borscht or beans.

Asch takes the Jewish religion into his service, and rewards it with a foggy and filial devotion. He can take its dogma, or leave it, but his universe would not be the same stable, decent place without its rituals. Half the novelette describes the preparations for a wedding—an anonymous pantomime that has the empty processional quality of American parades. There would be no reason to quarrel with a simply sensuous, even frivolous, acceptance of Jewish orthodoxy (though no village could be so preoccupied with the intake of food), but Asch is here and in his later writing as overserious and pious a secular man as can be found. And in every reverent image, there lurks a fillip to the senses.

THE second part of *Tales of My People* is offered in commemoration of Europe's exterminated Jews, and it seems to me that the seven very short stories in this section must have been written in a kind of willful blindness. They deal with the subhuman facts of the Nazi program in terms of a regressive and tasteless supernaturalism, at a level of absorption so ingenuous and thoughtless that it is almost corrupt. One can read some sort of humility into the camera's accuracy and the journalist's amorality, but Asch cannot control his tone of priestly sanctimoniousness. He shows no recognition that there is something incommunicable in the fate the Nazis inflicted upon the Jews and upon themselves. One story is an account of a Jewish child hidden in a concentration camp, whose eyes were removed for the purpose of being set into the earrings of a woman stormtrooper. The child dies, and her eyes are imbedded in the "Holy Throne" in heaven "where they shine with a clear blue light for the eyes of all the Jewish children whose light was extinguished."

He tells these stories with a frightening ease, like a governess reading in nursery accents out of a book of horror tales. I am not suggesting any lack of feeling or involvement on his part, only an abysmal helplessness of mind. Out of the extremity of his people's suffering, he tries to salvage a fragment of nominal dignity—not knowing the "human soul to be a very delicate thing which can receive eternal damage from a little patronage."

Historians and the Depression

THE AGE OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION. By DIXON WECTER. Macmillan. 362 pp. $5.00. DEPRESSION DECADE. By BROADUS MITCHELL. Rinehart. 462 pp. $5.50.

Reviewed by RICHARD HOFSTADTER

DIXON WECTER, one of our ablest social historians, has written, in *The Age of the Great Depression,* a discursive social history of the United States from 1929 to 1941. Although

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the publishers seem reluctant to admit it, the book is plainly meant to complete or continue the "History of American Life" series which Macmillan has been publishing since the middle 20's.

This series of books was conceived at a time when historians were intrigued with the idea of going beyond the conventional array of economic, political, diplomatic, and military events to tell what they considered to be the larger story of American life—intellectual and cultural trends, education, religion, amusements, and the mechanical paraphernalia of living. Capable historians were procured to write the series, but the books were not very successful. For the most part they failed to come into focus; they seemed to be about everything in general and nothing in particular; they were full of interesting facts, but almost devoid of interesting insights. They frequently read like catalogues, and this was particularly and lamentably true of their treatment of books and ideas. They seemed also to have been designed as supplementary reading for college courses in history, and accordingly written with the requisite gentility and at the not very flattering level of intellectual sophistication on which professors generally think the undergraduate mind should be approached.

Mr. Wecter has adapted himself all too well to the pattern of the series, with the consequence that his volume, although as good as the best of the others, is not nearly as good as his own unencumbered writing. It has too many of such pedestrian generalizations as: "The content of most motion pictures still was designed for escape"; or "Radio policy often mirrored the timidity of owners and advertisers." Its judgments are temperate almost to the point of tameness, and although they are usually discreet one exception must be noted here. On pages 237-38, writing of Hollywood's "preoccupation with sex," Wecter reports that it "was generally blamed, not upon the public who seemed to like it, but upon the movie makers, in the main Jewish Americans. The paradox of the home-loving Jew with his strong family solidarity and loyalty, transgressing the public moral codes of a Gentile civilization with the highest divorce rate in the world, was not without its piquancy. 'The Christian wishes to protect society at large, even if he should himself violate some of its rules of morality,' wrote a thoughtful Jewish observer. 'The Jew wishes to exploit society, while he himself exercises restraint.'"

I suspect that this passage was written with as little malice as thought. But there is significance in its intellectual vulgarity. It is a token of the casualness, the lack of responsibility, with which a great many historians have approached the history of ideas and of popular culture. The above quotation, if it were a singular or isolated remark, could easily be forgotten; but I recommend to those who are troubled by it that they also read the incredibily naive passage on movie censorship that follows it, in which organizations like the Legion of Decency are given credit for cleaning up the movies but in which no note is taken of the incredible inanity and triviality to which so many film plots have been reduced by the Hays code and its successors.

Broadus Mitchell's *Depression Decade*, which covers the same chronological span as Mr. Wecter's volume, is part of another series embracing American economic life from colonial times to the present. Although it is not as readable as Wecter's book, it does have a sharper focus, since it concerns only economic developments and relevant political events, and it has the sharply defined point of view of a liberal socialist. Unfortunately, it fails to solve the problem of organizing the history of economic events into a narrative, and its text is also much cluttered with statistics that should have gone into tables or pictographs. Nevertheless, it is an important book, which will be valued highly by anyone who needs to have at hand an intelligent, documented account of the economics of the depression decade.

I can recommend in particular its fair-minded appraisal of Herbert Hoover's efforts to cope with the depression and its detached estimate of the New Deal. Concerning the latter, Mr. Mitchell writes: "The New Deal failed, if we judge by its ability to bring about a fully functioning economy, for at the end of six years of effort the nation still had some ten million unemployed." Summarizing the positive achievements of the New Deal, Mr. Mitchell writes: "The New Deal proclaimed, and went a distance to prove, that we need not be frustrated by inscrutable misfortune, but could be masters of our future. This mental candor and moral lift formed the true contribution, and for them all praise is due." Mr. Mitchell also emphasizes—and I think it is an important serv-

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ice to do so now—that the nation "did not emerge from the decade of depression until pulled out by war orders from abroad and the defense program at home."

Freud's Sense of Tragedy

FREUD: ON WAR, SEX AND NEUROSIS. Edited by Sander Katz, Preface and Glossary by Paul Goodman. New York, Arts and Sciences Press. 288 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by LILLIAN BLUMBERG

THE nine papers in this collection reflect the terrible sadness which grew in Sigmund Freud; the result of his gradual loss of faith in the power of reason and his consequent disillusionment with humanity. In a larger work like *Die Traumdeutung* we share Freud's sense of exhilaration as he works out the intricacies of his theory, but since the editors have chosen for this edition minor essays that present only conclusions, and little of the theoretical considerations on which they are based, there is no exhilaration—we share only the sadness.

The loss of faith is apparent in the first paper (chronologically one of the latest in the book), in which Freud attributes the world's failure to accept psychoanalysis (this was in 1917) to the resistance aroused in the ego by the libido theory and the hypothesis that mental processes are unconscious. Intellectual considerations seem often to crumble under unconscious stresses, producing judgments that are not the result of reason but rather of compromises with emotional states.

Of the remaining eight papers all but the last are concerned with Freud's psychosexual theories. The longest of these is a case history ("Dora") which is noteworthy because it suggests many of the later elaborations of psychoanalytic theory. In view of the fact that at present the duration of an average analysis is customarily several years, it is historically interesting to note Freud's apology for not effecting a complete cure—"at least for those of the symptoms which were taken in hand"—in three months. The analysis was interrupted at the patient's own request.

Freud published the history of the eighteen-year-old "Dora," whose symptoms included severe headaches, nervous coughing, and periodic loss of voice along with depression and hysterical unsociability, in order to illustrate the psychosexual origins of hysteria. "Dora" disliked her mother intensely and seemed to dislike her father too, but at the same time she manifested a strong and peculiar attachment to him. "Dora's" father was involved at the time of his daughter's treatment in a love affair of several years duration, with a Frau K, whose husband had begun making erotic advances to "Dora" from the time she was fourteen years old.

TO THE extent that Dora is typical of Western society, Freud's obvious distaste—his moral distaste—for his patient, which breaks through his tone of scientific detachment, reflects his implicit moral disapproval of that society. "We are faced by a fact; and it is to be hoped that we shall grow accustomed to it, when we have put our own tastes on one side." And the facts, as Freud saw them, were unpleasant.

His disillusionment with man was in any case almost necessarily a consequence of his instinct theory, the postulate on which he based his concept of man's nature; for to believe, as Freud did, that the mind is a hierarchy of unconscious elemental instincts that dominate but are unknown to the intellect, is to believe that "the ego is not master in its own house." The will extends only as far as self-knowledge, but self-knowledge is inadequate, since the perceptions of one's self on which it rests are incomplete and untrustworthy.

In the last essay, "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" (1915), Freud feels that man's primitive instincts can and will always re-emerge into daylight, even though they are inhibited by the process of civilization, for "the primitive mind is, in the fullest sense of the word, imperishable." Although one might expect such regression to an instinctual level in time of war, what disturbed Freud even more was to recognize that the intellect is never—in war or peace—an independent force, and that logical arguments are impotent against emotional states.

Freud meant psychoanalysis to be a weapon in the search for truth, but found himself with a growing conviction that the intelligence with which mankind tries to grasp the truth was largely illusory. Whether or not one accepts the Freudian thesis, one appreciates the sadness: "In reality our fellow-citizens have not sunk so low as we feared because they had never risen so high as we believed."

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Book Reviewers in this Issue

John Berryman's book of poems *The Dispossessed* was published this fall by William Sloane Associates.

R. H. S. Crossman is a Labor Member of Parliament and an editor of the *New Statesman and Nation*.

James Baldwin is at present in Paris. His story "Previous Condition" appeared in the October 1948 Commentary.

Isa Kapp has written criticism for the New York *Times Book Review*, *Kenyon Review*, and Commentary.

Richard Hofstadter is assistant professor of history at Columbia. His book *The American Political Tradition* was published this fall by Knopf.

Lillian Blumberg is studying for her doctorate at New York University.

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THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE

We Need Not Fail

SUMNER WELLES

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